



## **Board Policy No. 522**

### **Policy for Transit-Oriented Development and Transit-Supportive Land Use**

**ADOPTED:** 5/1/1994

**RECENT AMENDMENT:** 7/14/2021

**SEE ALSO:** 334, 545

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:** SECTION 500, PLANNING & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

**SUBSECTION:** ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

**CONTROL DEPARTMENT:** PLANNING & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

#### **I. PURPOSE**

This purpose of this policy is to support growth and ridership, promote safety, provide amenities and easy, pleasant access to bus stops and transit service, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in relation to Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects and land use. Through this policy, AC Transit's goal is to influence the decisions of city and county governing and planning bodies, city planning and transportation staff, developers, other transit agencies, and road management agencies. AC Transit will be most effective and efficient if the inner East Bay continues to develop in a transit-oriented direction, with continued creation and expansion of transit-supportive land uses such as higher density housing, commercial, and other uses. This will help to both increase bus ridership and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases compared to car-oriented development. TOD allows AC Transit to efficiently provide affordable and accessible transportation in the East Bay.

#### **II. STAFF PERSONS AFFECTED**

Staff within AC Transit's Planning, Legislative Affairs and Community Relations (LACR), and Finance departments as well as staff in other departments may be involved. In addition, this policy may affect staff in cities, counties, and other entities with land use and road design authority.

#### **III. DEFINITIONS**

**"Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)"** means residential, commercial, or other development within or adjacent to AC Transit's jurisdiction or service areas that maximizes the amount of residential, business, and leisure space with easily access to public transportation. It promotes a symbiotic relationship between dense, compact, urban space and public transit use.

**"Transportation Demand Management (TDM)"** means the application of strategies and policies to help people use the infrastructure in place for transit through an understanding of how people make their transportation decisions. Strategies are multimodal and include methods to encourage transit use instead of private auto use, including, among others (bicycle use, micro-mobility, car-pooling, walking, tolling, etc.).

#### **IV. POLICY**

##### **A. Priorities for Supporting TOD**

AC Transit responds to proposals initiated by many different types of organizations including cities, developers and others. The District's response to proposals shall be based on the following:

1. **Prioritize Affordable Housing:** New plans and projects should maximize the number of affordable units to address the persistent housing shortage in the East Bay, especially among low-income residents.
2. **Prioritize Land Use Plans Near High Quality Transit:** Projects of interest are those that affect areas within a half-mile of a BART station, or a quarter-mile of an existing or proposed AC Transit Bus Rapid Transit, trunk route, Rapid, Transbay, major corridor or other bus line with frequent service, or corridors which may be suitable for restoration or creation of frequent service. The District has focused these high-quality services on these corridors.
3. **Prioritize Maximum Allowable Density:** Residential plans and projects with densities high enough to generate enough activity to support transit are high priority. In addition, off-street parking should be limited or eliminated to promote use of public transit.
4. **Prioritize Complete/15-minute Communities:** Complete communities are those that are located within walking distance to basic services like a grocery store or a library. These are sometimes described as "15-minute communities". Transit and 15-minute communities naturally support each other. Projects of interest are those that are located within 15-minute communities or could contribute to the development of such communities.
5. **Prioritize Projects with Substantial Impacts:** Detailed review of projects that have the potential to significantly improve or degrade transit service and/or residents' access to transit based on roadway configuration, travel speed, bus stops, bike/pedestrian pathways and site configuration. Plans affecting multiple bus stops and routes shall be given priority. Plans could have a substantial impact by creating a large number of units at a specific site, and/or by enabling a substantial number of units over a wider transit-served area over time.
6. **Focus on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs for Small Projects:** For residential projects of fifty units or less or similarly sized commercial projects, AC Transit will focus on TDM opportunities at the project, including the possibility of EasyPasses.
7. **Assess plans and projects to ensure that they make adequate provisions for transportation of students through means other than increased private automobile trips.**

**B. AC Transit's Role in Supporting TOD:**

1. **External:**
  - a. The District may act as a policy advocate to influence the plans and policies of regional agencies, counties, cities, transportation agencies, and the state.
  - b. The District may act as a stakeholder in responding to specific development projects and plans.

- c. The District may act as a service provider in offering EasyPass, implementing changes to service, or infrastructure improvements to facilitate development near an existing BART station or AC Transit Bus Rapid Transit, trunk route, Rapid, Transbay, major corridor or other bus line with frequent service.
  - d. The District may act as a partner with either cities and affordable housing developers in applying for grant funds that can benefit the District along with an affordable housing development that meets the TOD definition in the District's service area.
  - e. To facilitate TDM, consider providing bus passes to all residents of new developments and supporting city and regional policies to this effect.
  - f. To improve transit connections to new development, AC Transit generally seeks to provide service itself rather than have separate shuttles.
2. Internal: AC Transit may act as a plan/project sponsor, or in a rare circumstance provide land.

### **C. Design Guidelines**

1. When considering new TOD projects, it is recommended that developers and cities consult AC Transit's Designing with Transit and Multimodal Design guidelines, and the National Association of City Transportation Officials' Transit Street Design Manual for further design guidance.
2. AC Transit will review projects and plans to advocate and ensure that they provide adequate passenger amenities and comfortable waiting facilities—such as benches, shelters, lighting and real-time passenger information at bus stops.

### **D. Policy Implementation**

AC Transit may take any or all of the following actions to implement this policy:

1. Oral or written communication expressing AC Transit's position through formal correspondence or testifying at a public hearing.
2. At the direction of the General Manager, staff may participate in cities' and other agencies' Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and working groups convened to develop land use and related plans and projects.
3. Initiation of an EasyPass program and/or other TDM measures such as the dissemination of transit information with cities/developers.
4. The District may invite agencies to present plans to the AC Transit Board of Directors for on-record comments from the Board and the participating public.

## **V. AUTHORITY**

**A. Board Authority:**

The Board has the authority to take an official position in support or against specific projects. The Board also has authority to amend this policy from time to time as necessary or required.

**B. General Manager's Authority:**

The General Manager has the authority to authorize and direct activities in support of AC Transit's interests in relation to TOD projects.