



Traffic-Lite: Great Communities Have Less Traffic

How does Transit Oriented Development impact local traffic conditions?

Growth and development are happening in the Bay Area; it is just a matter of where. If we do not try to plan it around transit stations, then we are bound to face increased traffic. We need to decide whether we want car-centered or people-centered communities. If we continue to build as we have in the past, in low density tracts away from transit stations, then traffic will continue to worsen, compounded by future growth. Giving people choices so they can rely on transit for longer trips and walking or biking for short trips will go a long way toward decreasing the traffic and creating a new model for life in the Bay Area. Reducing traffic in the region is a central goal of creating transit oriented development.

How to ensure reduced traffic around a transit station:

By itself, locating homes and jobs next to transit stations will help. But to fully ensure that transit oriented development creates less traffic than a location far from transit, we must integrate the following:

DESIGN FOR PEOPLE TO WALK AND BIKE SAFELY People are much more likely to choose their feet or their bicycles as vehicles for getting around if they feel safe from crime and high speed traffic. Streets with lots of lights, activity and traffic signals that prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety are necessary to creating an environment with less vehicle traffic.

ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE If there are grocery stores, health clinics, child care centers, libraries, cafes, restaurants, and shops within walking distance of transit stations, homes or work, people will walk to use them.

In the Bay Area people who both live and work within a half mile of transit are ten times more likely to use transit.



Typical traffic conditions surrounding a compact affordable housing development across from the Pleasant Hill BART station in Contra Costa County.

BUILD COMPACT NEIGHBORHOODS

Apartment dwellers own fewer vehicles than those in detached homes regardless of income. A recent study of the factors influencing vehicle ownership in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Chicago found that transit service and density, along with income and household size, explained virtually all the variation in vehicle ownership between different neighborhoods in each region.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING People who live in developments with affordable housing drive less and create less traffic. Higher-income households own significantly more vehicles than lower-income households.

SENIOR HOUSING Projects with homes for seniors also generate less traffic. In the Bay Area, senior households (all members are 62+) own 31% fewer cars than households with no seniors.

NO FREE PARKING Charging for parking reduces the number of trips people make, miles traveled, pollution and need for parking spaces. Free parking is a strong incentive to drive alone. Parking spaces can cost \$20-60,000 each to build and in many places take up more space than the buildings they serve. Free parking is a big subsidy for drivers, and usually comes at a cost to those who use transit, bike, or walk. The land and resources used for parking could instead have been invested in wider sidewalks, lighting, benches, trees or public art.

Development at a transit station versus development away from transit:



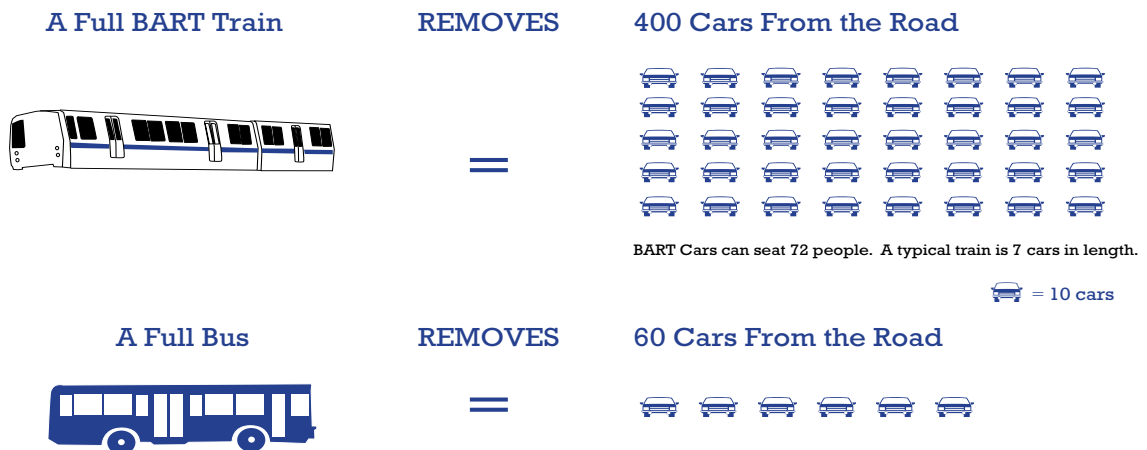
Pleasant Hill Transit Village

- 1,200 new homes
- 700,000 square feet of retail
- 1.3 million square feet of Offices
- 140 acres
- Next to Pleasant Hill BART

Northwest Pacific Plan, San Ramon

- 830 new homes
- no shops
- no offices
- 290 acres
- 9 miles to the nearest BART

Pleasant Hill Transit Village will create 1,800 fewer car trips per day than a similar development far from transit, even though the other development has fewer homes, fewer jobs, fewer shops and fewer community services.



Alice Slaughter - Resident of Metro Walk, Richmond, CA:

Living next to BART saves a lot of money on gas and transportation. There's less wear and tear on our car and it's simply less stressful than driving through heavy traffic, not knowing if I will get to work on time. I take BART everyday to downtown Oakland. Without BART as a viable transportation option I would have paid \$10 per day just for parking, in addition to sitting in traffic, battling traffic, and being stressed out when I got there. Being able to live within walking distance to BART allows me to begin and end almost everyday with a relaxing BART ride.