moving to work IN THE BAY AREA

A PROJECT OF THE GREAT COMMUNITIES COLLABORATIVE

Brief Four: Recommended Strategies and Future Research
LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

The Great Communities Collaborative is a group of organizations dedicated to ensuring that the San Francisco Bay Area is made up of healthy, thriving neighborhoods that are affordable to all and linked to regional opportunities by a premier transit network. We connect local residents with the tools and resources they need to influence decision making, forge diverse partnerships to craft lasting strategies and harness the means to help move visions to reality.

The Great Communities Collaborative envisions a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable San Francisco Bay Area where all people are able to shape the future of their communities. By working together, we can ensure that our region is made up of healthy, thriving neighborhoods that are affordable to all and well-connected to regional opportunities by a premier transit network.

Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that advises civic and community leaders on how to overcome the challenges associated with community development, to create better communities for all. Reconnecting America not only develops research and innovate public policy, but we also build on-the-ground partnerships and convene the players necessary to accelerate decision-making.

At Reconnecting America, we help transform promising ideas into thriving communities, where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. At Reconnecting America, we link people to the places that matter.

Urban Habitat builds power in low-income communities and communities of color by combining education, advocacy, research and coalition-building to advance environmental, economic, and social justice in the Bay Area.

We envision a society where all people live in economically and environmentally healthy neighborhoods. Clean air, land and water are recognized as fundamental human rights. Meaningful employment honors a worker’s right to dignity and a living wage with benefits. Effective public transportation and land-use planning connect people to the resources, opportunities and services to thrive. Affordable housing provides a healthy and safe home for all. And quality education prepares visionary leaders to strengthen our democracy with new ideas, energy and commitment.

We envision community leaders mobilizing an inspired, well-informed, and politically engaged constituency who hold decision-makers accountable to the principles of economic, environmental and social justice. In this society, equality, sustainability and diversity are the core values that guide public policy, creating a vibrant environment for this and future generations.
ABOUT THIS STUDY

*Moving to Work* is an applied research project undertaken to increase the regional knowledge of the intersection between three distinct fields: workforce development, economic development, and equitable transit-oriented development. **Workforce Development** prepares workers to enter career ladders through training, outreach and education. **Economic Development** grows the economy by fostering sectors and clusters of industries in which the region is competitive, and expanding “driving industries” which grow jobs across many sectors. Much work is already underway to link workforce and economic development. **Equitable Transit-Oriented Development**, the key focus of the Great Communities Collaborative, integrates transportation, land use, and housing to reduce the cost of living and expand access to opportunities for households of all incomes in the region. Understanding the interrelationship of these fields in a “spatial frame” based on geography, travel patterns, and transportation infrastructure – focuses our analysis and finds common ground between the fields.

The *Moving to Work* project includes the following elements:

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Link Bay Area equitable transit-oriented development initiatives with economic development and workforce development initiatives
- Inform the Bay Area’s Regional Economic Prosperity Plan, as part of the HUD-funded Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant process
- Understand mobility dynamics of low-income workers
- Identify strategies to increase career ladder job access for workers in areas of concentrated poverty
Recommended Strategies
AND FUTURE RESEARCH

BACKGROUND

Low-income workers in the Bay Area face multiple barriers to career advancement. We found that the economic and workforce development fields often overlook a key barrier: transit access. In turn, transit advocates often overlook the importance of job creation and training to the Bay Area economy and asset building. Moving to Work examines the critical role of transit – as well as development clustered around transit (“TOD”) – in linking low-income communities with career-ladder opportunities.

Findings from the Moving to Work project are summarized in four research briefs:

1. Barriers to Quality Jobs Faced by Low-Income Workers
2. The Role of Transportation in Addressing Barriers to Economic Opportunity
3. Access to Industries of Opportunity
4. Recommended Strategies and Future Research

This brief recommends policies and strategies, as well as future research, to the fields of economic, workforce, and transit-oriented development to link low-income communities with career-ladder opportunities.

Following are recommended policies and strategies aimed specifically at the intersection of the three distinct fields that together link low-income communities with career-ladder opportunities:

1. Business/Economic Development
2. Workforce Development
3. Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

The emphasis of this study is on transit or transit-oriented development (TOD); therefore, the recommendations are organized into four categories:

1. Equitable TOD and Economic Development
2. Equitable TOD and Workforce Development
3. Equitable TOD, Economic and Workforce Development
4. Equitable TOD and Industries of Opportunity
EQUITABLE TOD AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As described in Brief Two, one core strategy to reinforce long-term economic development is to maximize worker transportation choices when they commute. This is primarily done by ensuring job centers are well-connected to transit; however, in reality, the ability to do so is limited by the willingness of employers, geographic location and density of jobs, and commute patterns of workers. These factors vary across the region and within different industries, particularly within the Industries of Opportunity identified in Brief Three.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Key activities to reinforce economic development activities through transit and TOD include:

**Increased employer support for alternative transportation choices.** A number of large employers understand the importance of transportation choices as quality of life amenities for their workers, and thus have invested in various activities to support these transportation choices. Locating jobs in areas with multiple transportation options is especially important for low-income workers, who are two to three times more likely than higher income workers to walk or take transit to work. Employer activities include:

- Locating businesses in transit-rich locations.
- Offering pre-tax commuter benefits and other transit incentives.
- Ensuring the value of a transit pass or similar benefit is greater than or equal to the cost of paying for parking.
- Ensuring employers communicate all transportation options available to employees.
- Participating in transportation demand management (TDM) programs. For large employers this may include offering shuttles, vanpool coordination, and guaranteed rides home. For smaller employers this may include participating in a district- or facility-wide TDM program that can leverage economies of scale to offer similar programs across many employers.

**Local governments can improve “first” and “last mile” linkages from transit to neighborhoods and job centers.** Local agencies can support economic growth in congested job centers that are less transit-accessible through a number of activities:

- Helping local employers initiate TDM programs by providing information, resources, and coordinating capacity.
- Investing in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and adding bus connections from regional transit to job centers. In addition to incorporating these investments in local Capital Improvement Plans, this can be done through grant applications for One Bay Area Grants or similar county, regional, state or federal programs, or introducing value capture mechanisms as appropriate, such as Community Facilities Districts and property based Business Improvement Districts.
- Completing TOD plans designating transit-supportive land uses and urban design requirements near transit to help enhance the walkability of communities through new private development.

**Public/private shuttle systems are a key component of increasing transit access to jobs.** These can be coordinated by individual private employers, district or citywide public-private partnerships, or public agencies. Some systems are funded by climate mitigation/air quality grants. Examples of successful shuttle systems include the Oakland “B on Broadway” bus, Bishop Ranch shuttle, Caltrain shuttles, and the Emery Go-Round. Corporate shuttles limited to a firm’s full-time employees should consider ensuring access to a broader range of workers,
especially their own workers who are low-income, contract employees, or subcontracted employees (e.g. cleaning and food preparation staff). Shuttles managed by one employer might also consider partnering with employers in key origin locations to maximize use (e.g. shuttles serving San Mateo and Santa Clara County employers could also serve San Francisco employers in the reverse direction to reduce costs and environmental impacts).

**Mitigate displacement of vulnerable businesses from transit-rich communities.** Transit-rich communities that experience a boost in market demand for housing or commercial space could also experience displacement of small business that rely on lower rents to maintain a healthy profit margin. Where such instances exist, local governments might consider mechanisms to support the ongoing vitality of small businesses. This might take the form of offering small businesses supportive services such as those provided by Inner City Advisors, limiting the size of suite floor-plates, or considering other similar regulatory measures to reduce competition from national chains.

**AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

Because this study provides a preliminary exploration into the intersection of these three fields, a number of areas have emerged where further, more detailed research could help develop innovative implementation activities:

**Explore potential approaches to overcome perceived limitations of linking key sectors to transit and including them within TOD.** Many types of industries have perceived physical limitations to being transit supportive, such as low employment densities that do not generate significant ridership, or the need for large-scale operations including significant freight traffic that could present barriers to walkability. Similarly, many industries have operations that require a large number of employees to commute during off-peak hours when transit is not as frequent.

Many industries facing these challenges are also key Industries of Opportunity for low-income workers, and/or are key economic drivers (such as manufacturing). As a result, some cities have adopted policies to preserve land for industrial uses. However, this raises questions for high-capacity transit areas with industrial land. Is there some way to serve lower density manufacturing jobs (that also might not operate on a 9 to 5 schedule) and still achieve the goals of transit-oriented development? Addressing this question and potential conflict at sites such as the Sunnyvale Caltrain station and Warm Springs BART – where Tesla manufactures electric vehicles within the NUMMI plant – is a TOD priority. Additional research into serving off-hour and shoulder commute times that are critical to some industries (healthcare, retail) should also be considered.

**Research new ways to incentivize and/or require employment-based TOD at the local or regional level to promote transit use to employment centers. Increase share of jobs in transit-served locations.** Research by the Public Policy Institute of California has found that the share of jobs located near transit in California has diminished overall. In part this is because there are limited to no existing incentives for employers to locate near transit. Further research into potential incentives – building on attempted state-level programs such as the Illinois Location Efficiency Act and the New Jersey Transit Hub Tax Credit – might help inform future policies to incentivize job growth near transit.

Job growth in compact locations is also a consideration in Plan Bay Area. There is potential to align the Priority Development Area (PDA) growth strategy with employment areas (West Oakland, I-880 corridor) and to coordinate the distribution of employment and housing growth to BART stations that currently have a lower than average
BRIEF FOUR: MOVING TO WORK IN THE BAY AREA

share of housing or jobs. Incentives to support growth in these areas may include infrastructure investments in historic employment areas that have underperforming infrastructure to compete in today’s business climate.¹

Evaluate the role of small business in growing middle-skill TOD jobs and identify ways to increase pathways to middle-skill TOD jobs through small business development. This study did not delve into the potential economic opportunities created through small business development, particularly for low-income workers. Such an evaluation – along with the potential role that transit and TOD can take in supporting small businesses – could illuminate additional activities to better integrate the three fields.

EQUITABLE TOD AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Briefs One and Two discuss the range of potential barriers to upward economic opportunity faced by low-income workers. While only a subset of these barriers are related to transit access and TOD, several activities could play a significant role in increasing economic opportunity.

Identify transit connectivity gaps between service users from Communities of Concern and nearby GED/middle-skill training programs. Determine ways to address barriers such as high transportation costs and accessibility to training programs when planning for transportation and land-use issues in Communities of Concern.

• Understand the types of training and services needed in individual Communities of Concern to ensure the community is linked to the right programs (e.g. adult high school education, ESL programs, community college programs, soft skills).

• Provide extra points to attain grant funding or increase funding, in general, for land-use planning, infrastructure, and transit service improvements if located in Communities of Concern or in an area with a significant number of workforce development programs or middle-skill jobs.

• Locate training within Communities of Concern that most need this training to address transportation gaps facing many potential students or patrons. Further, create a better marketing strategy for training opportunities to reach out effectively to potential users, especially in Communities of Concern.

Consider city colleges and major job training centers in long-term transit and land use plans. Treat community colleges, adult education facilities, and other job-training programs as an asset and a key destination on the regional transit network in order to eliminate barriers for potential students who are transit dependent. This may include taking into consideration the number of students taking night classes as part of transit service planning.

• Identify these facilities as part of station-area and other land-use planning activities at the local scale.

• Identify the need for shuttles between training programs at the regional scale. This is particularly important to consider in areas where community colleges might be consolidating programs to a handful of campuses. Utilize the College of Alameda-Laney College shuttle as a model.

Provide a free or discounted transit pass for low-income students or parents in need of public transportation who are enrolled in classes, job interviews or job training programs.² Examples of free or reduced fare transit passes include the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority’s two-year pilot program for low-income riders and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency’s 16-month test program for low-income youth riders.

¹ http://bit.ly/19amXHX
² Putting the Pieces Together: People Powered Solutions for Neighborhood Jobs and the Local Economy
Improve transit access to services addressing other key barriers to employment, such as adult education for English proficiency, soft skill training, and affordable childcare. This could involve both investments in transit and relocation of these services to transit-rich locations.

Consider housing stability as a factor in workforce readiness (i.e. cost/health/safety conditions of home) and be prepared to refer clients to other services (i.e. tenant protections). In areas such as San Mateo County, with transit and job-rich cities such as Redwood City and Menlo Park, creating opportunities for workers to live near work will help reduce the cost and time associated with long commutes from areas of lower cost housing to quality jobs.

Expand local hire and training policies for investments in transportation and TOD. Use the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Construction Careers program as a model, which targets hiring in disadvantaged communities throughout Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy has created a guidebook to ensure local residents in these communities understand the process to receive the training needed to fill Metro jobs.

EQUITABLE TOD, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Although limited collaboration exists between the three distinct fields covered in the Moving to Work project – Business/Economic, Workforce, and Equitable Transit-Oriented Development – existing opportunities lay the groundwork to better link the fields together and ultimately connect low-income communities with career-ladder opportunities.

Prioritize regional and countywide funding for infrastructure and congestion management to support connections to key employers, training centers, and low-income communities. As the Bay Area economy functions more as a region and less as individual cities, the funding mechanisms supporting job creation, especially for low-income communities, should address business/economic, workforce, and transit-oriented development at a regional level rather than as a vehicle for increasing a city’s tax base or as a means of luring businesses from one Bay Area jurisdiction to another.

Participate in existing collaborations between community colleges and workforce development communities to build a local pipeline such as the Bay Area Workforce Collaborative. By bringing transit and TOD issues to an existing collaborative focused on workforce and economic development, transit and TOD advocates can engage in conversations with stakeholders on larger public policy issues, especially those related to transit and TOD. Brief Two seeks to foster these discussions.

Consider ways that transit access and other transportation infrastructure can support models such as Linked Learning and Career Advancement Academies that enable project-based, school-based enterprise and work-based learning. Contra Costa is a state leader in these efforts, and is an excellent starting point for understanding the role transit can play in supporting workforce and economic development goals. Encourage regional agencies and local jurisdictions to coordinate with the Career Advancement Academies and related initiatives seeking ways to build a new pipeline from education to economic opportunity.
RECOMMENDATIONS BY INDUSTRIES OF OPPORTUNITY

Brief Three focused on highlighting some of the potential transit and TOD-related barriers and opportunities associated with the six Industries of Opportunity. This section summarizes some of these specific gaps with preliminary ideas on ways these can be addressed through transit or TOD investments.

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<th>INDUSTRIES OF OPPORTUNITY</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP TO TOD AND SAMPLE ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>HEALTH CARE</td>
<td><em>Relationship to TOD</em></td>
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<td>Because the healthcare industry can operate in multistory buildings, providing both medical services and administrative support, these jobs are some of the easiest to locate near transit and in more compact environments. However, many hospitals recently have been built without transit access, especially larger hospitals which require larger floor plates. In addition, healthcare workers tend to work off-peak shifts and do not have access to the same frequent transit that workers in typical office jobs enjoy.</td>
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<td>• Regional and local transit planners can work with healthcare facilities when creating transit service plans to ensure that transit service aligns with worker shifts.</td>
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<td>• Last mile connections are important for the safety and ease of workers starting shifts very early or late in the day. Kaiser’s MacArthur BART shuttles are one model of how this can work.</td>
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<td>• One example of a TOD located healthcare facility, Washington Hospital near the Fremont Civic Center BART, can better utilize its prime transit-friendly location through better site planning in relationship to the BART station.</td>
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<td>ENERGY</td>
<td><em>Relationship to TOD</em></td>
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<td>The nature of the energy sector (the need for more space for operations and the location of existing jobs) makes it more difficult to cluster jobs in compact transit-served nodes. However, some jobs could be clustered, including laboratory jobs and the smaller scale manufacturing work to improve transit access.</td>
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<td>• Prioritize employee access if providing local economic development subsidies to these employers.</td>
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<td>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td><em>Relationship to TOD</em></td>
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<td>The IT sector is a major force in the Bay Area economy, and the sheer scale of jobs, particularly in the South Bay and Peninsula, creates a density of jobs that makes transit access possible. However, historical land-use patterns in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and the tendency of IT employers such as Google and Apple to locate on large inaccessible campuses, makes public transit access a challenge.</td>
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<td>The private shuttle systems of major corporations have played a major role in improving non-auto access, and subsequently decreasing auto trips from large campuses. However, these shuttles also have their drawbacks: contract employees sometimes pay to use the services, and if the firms become less profitable or move and leave their facilities for other firms, the shuttle services could disappear, leaving major employment facilities disconnected from the public transit network and creating a congestion nightmare.</td>
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<td>• Analyze the share of IT jobs in PDAs today and projected in Plan Bay Area to show whether this sector is expected to grow more compactly.</td>
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<td>• Study private shuttle connections and better understand the function they serve today and could potentially serve later in the regional transit network.</td>
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<td>Finally, while the analysis in Brief Three only looked at the IT sector, in reality, these jobs are within every sector of the economy – schools, banks, and every place where there is a need for computer networks – and so some IT jobs are highly transit accessible while others are not.</td>
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<td>• Workforce providers focused on the broad set of IT jobs should consider transit access when linking job seekers with employment opportunities.</td>
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<td>TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS</td>
<td>Relationship to TOD</td>
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| Because many jobs in this sector offer livable wages and low barriers to entry, transportation and logistics jobs may offer high-quality employment opportunities to lower- and middle-skill workers. However, the trend in this industry today is that more and more firms are moving to less expensive land on the borders or just outside of the region. This has major equity implications for the ability of lower-income workers to access these jobs.  
  - The region’s airports and ports will remain major geographic centers for this industry. Transit service providers and long-range planners should work to ensure transit service is available to connect workers to these major job centers. The timing of transit service will be especially crucial for workers in these locations.  
  - Land uses around airports and ports are not naturally walkable or bike-friendly, so consider bicycle, pedestrian, bus and shuttle options or other TDM programs such as carpool/vanpool. |

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<th>BIOTECH/ LIFE SCIENCES</th>
<th>Relationship to TOD</th>
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| Biotech is an agglomeration of several more traditional industry sectors (including manufacturing, healthcare, and science and research), but the biotech sector has the opportunity to think innovatively about how firms can be located.  
  - Cities and economic development agencies interested in supporting Biotech jobs can work with firms to consider how it may be possible to support facilities that better fit within the urban fabric to locate near transit or in major job centers rather than in greenfield locations. |

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<th>ADVANCED AND FOOD MANUFACTURING</th>
<th>Relationship to TOD</th>
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| Linking the residents who live near these job clusters to the training and jobs in their neighborhood is critical to supporting the region’s economy. One employer located near the Oakland Airport found that as the number of employees in the company increased from 11 to 800, the workforce is traveling from as far away as Antioch and Brentwood and that those long commute distances have started to impact job quality.  
  - Some of the region’s large clusters of manufacturing are close to transit, but need support for last-mile connections, potentially both shuttles that can serve a group of businesses or firms, and investments in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.  
Maintaining industrial land to support the region’s growth sectors (including knowledge and IT-related work) will be important for the region’s competitiveness moving forward and doesn’t force industries (and jobs) to move further away from the inner Bay Area. |