



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Bob Allen, Transportation and Housing Program Director, Urban Habitat,
510-435-4745 (cell) or 510-839-9510 ext. 312 (land)

Para información en español, favor de llamar a Guillermo Mayer, Public Advocates,
415-431-7430, ext. 309

MEDIA ADVISORY

MTC vote could blow \$70 million

Feds put Oakland Airport Connector--and stimulus bucks--on hold until BART obeys civil rights rules

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will vote Jan. 27 on whether to cling to the Oakland Airport Connector project, or reallocate \$70 million in federal stimulus funds to help area transit agencies avert service cuts, fare hikes and layoffs that will affect hundreds of thousands of people. Public transit riders and supporters from community, religious, civil rights and labor groups around the Bay Area will hold a press conference and rally before the MTC meeting to urge the Commissioners to save jobs and transit. They will gather at 101 8th St. in Oakland at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 27th.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) found that BART shirked its civil rights obligations in planning the project. The FTA will not release the \$70 million in stimulus money slated for the Connector unless BART complies with the rules. The stimulus funds must be committed to projects by March 5, or they will be withdrawn. In its Jan. 15 letter to BART and MTC, the FTA said that pursuing the Connector project "involves considerable risk to the \$70 million in ARRA funds currently programmed by the FTA for the project." The FTA ruling came in response to a complaint filed by the non-profit law firm Public Advocates on behalf of Urban Habitat, TransForm and Genesis.

BART estimates the Connector will attract 600 new riders and cost more than a half-billion dollars to build. The 3.2-mile tram will cost riders \$6 each way, on top of the cost of their BART tickets, and make no stops between BART's Coliseum station and the airport. The FTA ruling supports the main objection voiced by transit justice advocates: In addition to being expensive and inefficient, the Airport Connector as proposed deprives low-income riders in communities of color equal access to transit. By funding the Connector when lower cost options are available, the MTC would be taking money away from those who use and need transit the most.

WHAT: Rally and press conference before Metropolitan Transportation Commission meeting

WHO: Transit users and members or representatives of community, religious, civil rights and labor organizations, including Urban Habitat, Public Advocates, TransForm and Genesis.
(Organizational info follows.)

WHEN: Wednesday, Jan. 27th. Rally begins at 9 a.m.; press conference at 9:15 a.m.; MTC meeting set to start at 9:45.

WHERE: 101 8th St., Oakland



Organizations and Contacts

Urban Habitat

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.

On the Web: <http://www.urbanhabitat.org>

Contact: Bob Allen, Transportation & Housing Program Director, bob@urbanhabitat.org, 510-839-9510, ext. 312

Genesis

Genesis is a regional, faith- and value-based community organization in the Bay Area. Members represent religious congregations, associations, union locals, and other community organizations. Genesis is affiliated with the Gamaliel Foundation, an international network of faith and value based organizations.

On the Web: <http://genesisca.org>

Contact: Marcia Lovelace, (510)593-6824

Public Advocates Inc.

Public Advocates Inc. is a nonprofit law firm and advocacy organization that challenges the systemic causes of poverty and racial discrimination by strengthening community voices in public policy and achieving tangible legal victories advancing education, housing and transit equity.

On the Web: <http://www.publicadvocates.org>

Contact: Guillermo Mayer, Staff Attorney, gmayer@publicadvocates.org; 415-431-7430, ext. 309

TransForm

TransForm (formerly TALC, the Transportation and Land Use Coalition) works to create world-class public transportation and walkable communities in the Bay Area and beyond. Since its founding in 1997, TransForm has advocated for increased funding to support transportation choices in the Bay Area.

On the Web: <http://www.transformca.org/>

Contact: John Knox White, Program Director, john@transformca.org; 510-740-3150 ext. 371