



AGENDA REPORT

City Council

DATE:	May 27, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Councilmember Jamelia Brown Vice Mayor Cesar Zapeda (co-sponsor)
Subject:	Presentation by Transbay Coalition for the development of a Citywide Community-Led Bus Stop Bench Program
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no direct fiscal impact to the City for bench construction or maintenance. Community groups will fund installations through donations and grants. The City will implement a permitting process with all fees waived, and eligible groups may apply for available City grants. Minimal staff time will be needed for the permitting process and possible grant coordination.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	None
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	<p>Across the City of Richmond, many bus stops lack basic seating, forcing riders—particularly seniors, people with disabilities, and those with health or mobility challenges—to stand for extended periods. This absence of seating creates barriers to public transit use, undermines transportation equity, and contradicts the City's environmental and accessibility goals.</p> <p>In the face of limited City resources and anticipated AC Transit service reductions, Richmond residents have demonstrated innovation and resilience. Over 70 community-built benches have been installed throughout the East Bay, including 7 in Richmond. These benches are</p>

	widely used and valued, filling a critical gap in infrastructure without burdening the City's budget. A citywide policy is needed to support, guide, and scale these grassroots efforts—ensuring safety, clarity, and continued community participation in building a more accessible and rider-friendly Richmond.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	RECEIVE a presentation by Transbay Coalition for the development of a Citywide Community-Led Bus Stop Bench Program and DIRECT staff to develop a Community-Led Bus Stop Bench Program (Policy) that establishes a formal permitting process, waives all associated fees, and incorporates the design standards and guidelines developed by the Transbay Coalition and approved by City Public Works. The program will enable local volunteers, advocacy groups, and community stakeholders to legally install and maintain benches at approved bus stop locations throughout Richmond that currently lack adequate seating - Councilmember Jamelia Brown (510-609-5780) and Vice Mayor Cesar Zepeda (510-685-5002).

DISCUSSION:

Bus stop benches are a low-cost, high-impact public infrastructure improvement that encourages transit use, reduces congestion and pollution, and promotes transportation equity. As public transit agencies face service cuts, the need to make waiting areas more accessible, comfortable, and dignified has become increasingly urgent—particularly for seniors, people with disabilities, and transit-dependent residents.

Currently, Richmond has no formal program or permitting process that allows community members to legally install benches at bus stops. Despite this, residents—through partnerships with groups like the San Francisco Bay Area Bench Collective and the Transbay Coalition—have already responded to this service gap. Over 70 community-built benches have been installed throughout the East Bay, including 7 in Richmond. These benches are widely used and appreciated by riders.

Each bench costs approximately \$150 to build, and the outpouring of community interest has produced more volunteers than can currently be deployed. If approved, the Transbay Coalition is committed to ensuring all approved benches are installed at bus stops across Richmond by the end of summer 2025, at no cost to the City.

This proposed policy would:

- Establish a formal and streamlined permit process
- Waive all associated permit fees to remove financial barriers
- Adopt design and safety standards approved by City Public Works
- Coordinate with AC Transit, WestCAT Transit, and City departments
- Include maintenance and removal protocols
- Encourage “Adopt-a-Bench” community stewardship
- Allow groups to access available City grants to support material costs

Aligning with AC Transit’s 2025 resolution encouraging improved bus stop amenities, this program presents a scalable, community-driven model to enhance Richmond’s infrastructure while empowering civic engagement and supporting sustainability goals.

Improving bus stop infrastructure increases public transit ridership, thereby reducing car use, emissions, and parking demand. A bench refurbishment/removal protocol will encourage responsible recycling of materials and discourage waste. The program will also prioritize high-need, underserved neighborhoods to ensure equitable impact.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Presentation: Bus Stop Bench Program [Richmond Bench Policy - Google Slides](#)

Attachment 2 – Draft Design and Installation Guidelines (To Be Approved by Public Works)