

East Bay transit village inches closer to reality

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By: Blanca Torres

The MacArthur BART transit village is one step closer to breaking ground — but still many steps away from being completed.

The developers behind the project recently finalized a \$34 million agreement with the City of Oakland that will allow the project to start construction of the first phase within a year.

The first phase of the development will include building a new garage for BART patrons and infrastructure such as sewers and roadways.

The \$320 million project is being developed by MacArthur Transit Community Partners LLC, a partnership between Oakland-based McGrath Properties, and **Bridge Urban Infill Land Development**, a subsidiary of Bridge Housing.

The transit village will include five phases of construction on 624 residential units, 42,500 square feet of commercial and retail space, up to 510 parking spaces, renovation of the BART plaza and public areas. The city granted entitlements for the project last summer after selecting the development team in 2004.

“Negotiating the final details with the city took longer than anyone would have liked,” said Lydia Tan, interim president of Bridge Housing, which is planning a 108-unit affordable housing development to be built during the second phase of the project. “It’s one of the more complicated developments we worked on.”

Oakland’s \$34 million will come out of redevelopment and low-income housing

funds. The state will kick in another \$37.3 million from Prop. 1C money that is intended for transit-oriented developments. The remaining costs will be funded with developer equity and loans.

Under the agreement with Oakland, the project could take up to 15 years to build out, but Tan said she expects the phases to come online faster.

Joe McCarthy, project manager for the transit village, said the last three phases, which will include market-rate condos, could come online during a healthier real estate cycle.

“There’s three to five years of infrastructure work to be done,” he said. “We really want to get things started now, so we can time the market perfectly.”