

#2009-074

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BOARD MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE BY ADOPTING CITIZEN OVERSIGHT OF BART PD STATE LAWMAKERS URGED TO FINALIZE CITIZEN OVERSIGHT**

**OAKLAND, CA** – In a unanimous vote, the BART Board of Directors reached a major milestone today in delivering on its commitment to improve police services and public confidence by approving independent citizen oversight of the BART Police Department.

“Today’s Board action is truly historic,” BART Board Member Carole Ward Allen said. Ward Allen chairs the BART Police Department Review Committee, which Board President Thomas Blalock created following the January 1 shooting of Oscar Grant on the platform of Fruitvale Station by a former police officer. “What we approved today has one of the strongest components of citizen oversight in the state of California. The process now moves to the state legislature. We urge our state representatives to take swift action so we can implement citizen oversight this year as we continue to work to make the BART Police Department the best it can be.”

“We have a dedicated, professional and highly trained police force at BART and we want to keep it that way,” Director Joel Keller said. Keller is the vice chair of the committee. “Citizen oversight, if done properly, can help us achieve that.”

### **BART NEEDS CHANGE IN STATE LAW TO MOVE FORWARD**

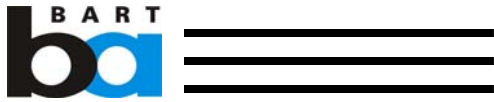
BART is a special district created by the state legislature and requires an amendment of the BART Act to create citizen oversight as adopted by the Board today.

The citizen oversight the Board adopted encompasses two major areas where legislative change is required to meet its stated purpose. The first area involves the creation of the position of independent police auditor. Because the auditor would report directly to the Board, the position requires an amendment to the BART Act.

The second area requires amending the General Manager’s authority to provide for a role for the auditor and the board in the discipline process for members of the police department. In BART’s newly adopted citizen review, both the independent auditor and the Board would each have a role in recommending discipline, which also requires an amendment to the BART Act.

“We are only seeking permissive changes to state law,” BART Board Member Tom Radulovich said. Radulovich has been a long supporter of BART Police citizen oversight and sits on the BART Police Department Review Committee. “The citizen oversight we adopted today is based on what members of the community have told us they want. It incorporates the community’s needs and the best elements of the various citizen oversight entities at police departments around the Bay Area and beyond.”

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# NEWS RELEASE

[www.BART.gov](http://www.BART.gov)

## **CITIZEN OVERSIGHT RESULT OF COMMUNITY INPUT**

The Board adopted the citizen oversight model after months of careful study of existing citizen oversight entities and by hearing from the community at public meetings and through written comments.

“Today’s action sends a clear message that this Board is committed to fulfilling its promises,” BART Board Member Lynette Sweet said. Sweet also sits on the BART Police Department Review Committee. “We told the community we would adopt a strong citizen oversight of BART Police this year, and today we delivered on that promise. Now we need help from state legislators to amend the law so we can implement citizen oversight.”

## **CITIZEN OVERSIGHT MODEL AVAILABLE ONLINE**

The citizen oversight model adopted by the Board is available online at [www.BART.gov](http://www.BART.gov).

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