

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 1/24/2024

Staff Report No. 23-250f

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Set Public Hearings: Realign Draft Final Plan Proposal

ACTION ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider setting hybrid Public Hearings before the Board of Directors at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at AC Transit's General Offices; and direct staff to hold two remote Public Hearings on March 11, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. and March 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. regarding the Realign Draft Final Service Plan Proposal.

Staff Contact:

Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service

Initiative - Service Quality

Setting the Public Hearings for March 2024 will allow for consideration of public comments between January and March and provide staff with time to revise the Draft Final Service Plan Proposal for Board consideration and adoption in April 2024, and implementation in August 2024. The service proposals in the Realign Draft Final Service Plan Proposal are designed to adjust AC Transit's service network in response to changes in how the communities served by the District use transit service following the pandemic.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The Public Hearing itself has an estimated cost of \$24,000 for interpreters and consultant support costs which are built into the larger consultant contract for the plan, along with the cost of staff resources related to the in-house effort. All costs associated with the Public Hearing are included within the adopted FY 2023-24 Budget.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

This report calls for setting Public Hearings before the Board of Directors at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on March 13, 2024 at AC Transit's General Offices as well as two remote Public Hearings led by staff on March 11, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. and March 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. regarding the Realign Draft Final Service Plan Proposal. Staff and the consultant team led by Kittelson and Associates reviewed the input received on the service scenarios

during the Phase 3 engagement period between the Board Workshop on November 1, 2023, and the Board update on December 13, 2023. The team has since consolidated proposals into a single Draft Final Service Plan Proposal for consideration and comment by the public and the Board.

For background, the project is divided into five key phases, the first three of which are complete as of 12/13/23:

1. Develop Plans and Learn Rider Needs (Mar 2023-Jun 2023) - Complete
2. Align Guiding Principles with Community Assessment (Jul 2023-Aug 2023) - Complete
3. Develop Service Plan Scenarios and Gather Feedback (Sep 2023-Dec 2023) - Complete
4. Draft Final Service Plan Proposal and Plan Adoption (Jan 2024-Apr 2024) - Ongoing
5. Develop Service Standards and Inform Riders about Service Changes (Apr 2024 - Sep 2024)

The planning process is now in Phase 4, which focuses on creating a single, draft service plan proposal for another round of engagement.

A key change with this phase is the Unconstrained Vision Scenario has been removed from the public hearing and will be on a separate, longer track with a goal of Board consideration and approval by the end of 2024. Staff would conduct a separate Public Hearing in the future as resources become available to implement portions of the Unconstrained Vision.

The Draft Final Service Plan Proposal has been adjusted in the following ways to reflect input received during phase 3:

- Overall system-wide frequencies have been reduced when compared to current service levels. Feedback from the community during phase 3 made clear that a loss of coverage was not an acceptable tradeoff in most cases and that reliability improvements were also necessary. As a result, many lines will be coming less often than they do today but should come more reliably.
- Line 6 will serve the current Line 51A alignment in Alameda. Line 51 A and B will still be combined, but will also be shortened to Lake Merritt BART, separating some delay and reliability challenges associated with traveling to Alameda via the Webster/Posey Tube.
- Line 12 will not serve Berkeley Marina as the community expressed a preference for the Marina to be served by the line serving University Ave (51).
- Line 19 is proposed to serve the Main Street Ferry Terminal in Alameda.
- Line 39 is proposed to be eliminated and Line 21 will operate from Bay Farm Island to Skyline via Fruitvale Ave.
- Line 52 will not serve Cedar street east of Sacramento Street and staff will explore serving that segment in the Unconstrained scenario.
- Line 61 serving Maxwell Park and Fruitvale BART is no longer proposed.
- Lines 65 and 67 will retain service and are proposed to operate every 40 and 60 minutes, respectively.
- Line 72R is no longer recommended to be discontinued and all three 72-series lines (72, 72M, and 72R) are proposed to operate every 30 minutes on weekdays.
- Line 74 will continue to serve most of El Sobrante minus the least productive segment at the end of the route.
- No lines in Central County (Hayward, Ashland, Cherryland, Castro Valley) will be consolidated.
- Line 239 is proposed to serve Kato Road in the event a microtransit option is not available by August

2024.

- Line NX will no longer be extended and Line NX3 will be restored.
- Line G will maintain its existing alignment.
- Line U is no longer proposed to be transferred to the Dumbarton Express Service umbrella and as such service is proposed to be reduced on Lines 216, 232, and 251 to every 60 minutes.

The reliability improvements have resulted in reductions in frequency on 15 lines from what was proposed in the Balanced Coverage Scenario. Analysis was conducted to reveal the reductions in frequency on the lines in the table below will not result in overcrowding:

| Line | Headway (minutes) | |
|------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Balanced Coverage Proposal | Change to Improved Reliability |
| 10 | 17 | 20 |
| 12 | 20 | 30 |
| 14 | 17 | 20 |
| 18 | 15 | 20 |
| 41 | 40 | 60 |
| 45 | 20 (peak) | 30 all day |
| 57 | 15 | 20 |
| 60 | 40 | 45 |
| 65 | 40 | 45 |
| 72 | 15 | 30 |
| 72M | 15 | 30 |
| 72R | - | 30 |
| 88 | 20 | 30 (after 8pm) |
| 212 | 30 | 40 |
| 232 | 30 | 40 |

More detail on the specific proposals is included in Attachment 1 and on the project website at actransit.org/realign <<https://actransit.org/realign>>. The website also includes data about the current system and background data about the proposals.

The Draft Final Service Plan Proposal represents the most equitable distribution of resources across the service area given the feedback received during Phase 3 and the need to improve reliability. It also represents a strong starting point for a future network upon which the District can build additional service as more operators and funding become available. Having the right routing in place will allow the District to increase frequency with more resources. The frequencies of individual lines may be adjusted for final Board adoption in April 2024 by as much as five minutes based on layover constraints and real-world operating conditions.

Phase 3 and 4 Engagement Updates

AC Transit conducted Phase 3 engagement between November 1 and December 13, 2023. The objective of this engagement phase was to collect public feedback on the draft service scenarios and inform the

development of a draft final service network plan to be implemented in August 2024 that better meets community needs under existing resources.

Attachment 3 is the Phase 3 Engagement Report that summarizes the engagement activities and feedback received during that phase. Over this period, 68 events were held through local jurisdiction meetings, with community-based organizations (CBOs), and at heavily used bus stops and transit centers with nearly 2,000 touch points recorded throughout the AC Transit service area. Additionally, outreach activity resulted in 38,442 Realign website page views, featured eNews distributions to 34,045 recipients, included a robust print and digital outreach campaign on buses, in the media and online, and gathered community input received during Phase 3, including next steps.

Phase 4 engagement will officially begin on January 19 and close on March 13, 2024, commensurate with the Public Hearing. This phase provides another opportunity for community feedback on a single Draft Final Service Plan Proposal that is expected to go to the AC Transit Board for adoption in April 2024. The project webpage will continue to serve as the central location for information and feedback. A District-wide online community workshop is scheduled for February 7, 2024, at 6:00pm. Presentations at local jurisdiction meetings, pop-ups at bus stops and transit centers, along with hosted CBO events, and a Lived Experience Advisory Group meeting are planned for this phase. Visit actransit.org/realign <<https://actransit.org/realign>> to find us in your community.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Setting a Public Hearing allows the project team to keep the project on schedule and will allow for formal input on the Draft Final Service Plan Proposal for the Board to consider prior to proposed adoption in April.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

There is no action being considered at the Public Hearing in March and no alternatives to holding it are being proposed.

With respect to the proposals in the plan itself, staff considered an approach for the Draft Final Service Plan that hewed closer to the Frequent Service Scenario and continued to focus service in the most productive areas, but it was clear from feedback generated in Phase 3 that tradeoffs associated with losing coverage or service in low-ridership areas was not well received. Staff also considered not including reliability improvements and keeping service levels higher; however, the reliability improvements were a frequent request and it's important for the public to understand the tradeoff associated with the additional running time.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

SR 22-502 Network Redesign Timeline Update and Procurement Approval
SR 23-250 Realign Network Plan Update
SR 23-250a Realign Network Plan Update
SR 23-250b Realign Network Plan Update
SR 23-250c Realign Network Plan Update and Revised Guiding Principles Approval
SR 23-250d Realign Draft Service Scenarios

SR 23-250e Realign Phase 3 Summary
Board Policy 110 - Public Hearing Policy

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Final Service Plan Proposal Matrix
2. Draft Public Hearing Notice
3. Phase 3 Engagement Report
4. Table of Proposed New Streets
5. Maps of Proposed Discontinued Segments
6. Draft Final Plan Proposal Presentation

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