

ASHBY SERVICE ALTERNATIVES MEMO

Winter 2023

This memo discusses the alternatives that were considered for serving the Ashby segment of Line 80 as well as the lines proposed for service cuts to offset the costs associated with adding service on Ashby.

SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

Staff evaluated six options for bringing back pre-pandemic service levels to Ashby Avenue:

- 1) Line 7 Extension
- 2) Line 65 Extension
- 3) Line 67 Extension
- 4) Line 79 Extension
- 5) Line E Local
- 6) New Ashby-only Line

In developing alternatives for serving Ashby, staff prioritized options that would not remove service from streets where it exists today while maximizing potential ridership with minimum additional cost in terms of operators, buses, and dollars. Each alternative is discussed below with a description of the alternative and advantages and drawbacks for each.

LINE 7 EXTENSION

This alternative would extend Line 7 from its southern terminus in downtown Berkeley along Shattuck to the Bancroft/Durant couplet, then College, then onto Ashby before reaching Emeryville Amtrak via 7th, Folger, Hollis, and 62nd.

Staff evaluated extending Line 7 to serve the Ashby corridor for a number of reasons:

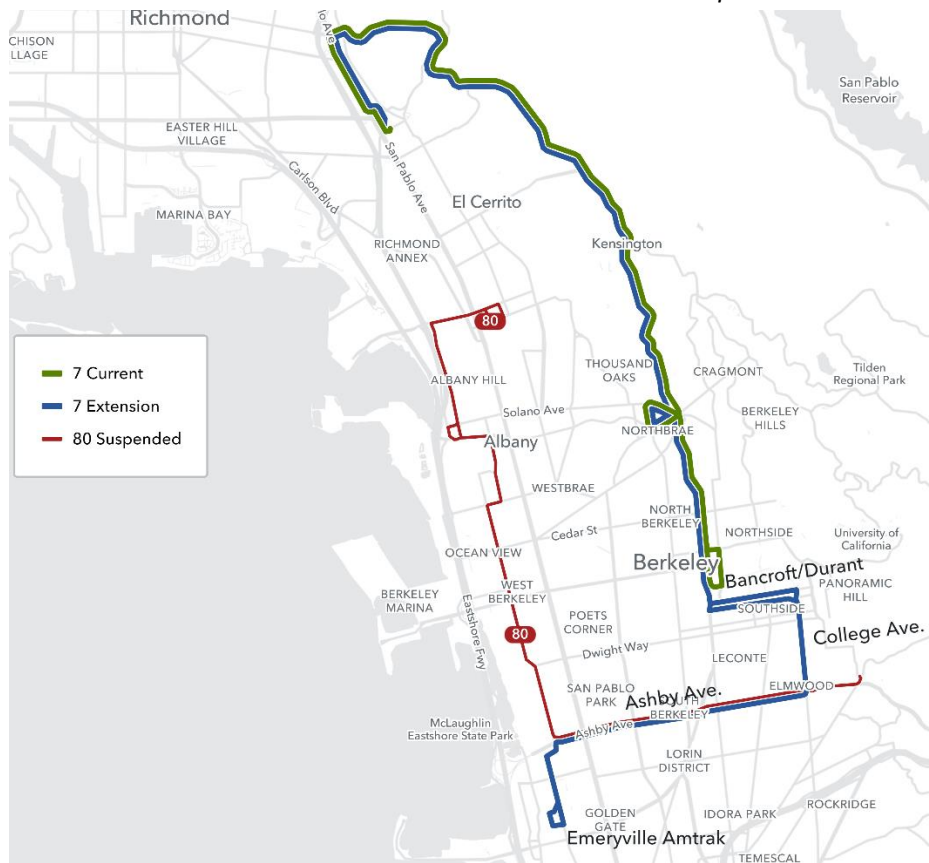
- It would allow for Ashby to be connected to downtown Berkeley and UC Berkeley, which would create a strong trip-generating anchor that Line 80 didn't have.
- It would reduce stress on layover space in downtown Berkeley.
- It would be routed along Bancroft/Durant and College which would increase ridership and help reduce crowding on Line 51B.
- It would provide 30-minute service, seven days a week.
- It would provide another Berkeley north/south crosstown route and beyond.
- It would have layovers on both ends of the line.

However, in reviewing this option, staff identified a number of drawbacks:

- The round-trip time for the route would be very long and extending it would require three buses and six operators to implement.

- It generally serves a less disadvantaged population and Line 7 is #36 on the Board-approved list of restoration priorities. Serving Ashby with Line 7 would allow it to be restored ahead of many other lines ahead of it on the list of priorities. The three buses required to implement this option would mean the District would need to wait longer to restore lines 73 and 99, the next two lines on the service restoration priorities list.
- Staff would need to review the routing geometry to make sure it works for District buses.

Exhibit 1 – Line 7 Extension Alternative Map



LINE 65 EXTENSION

This alternative would extend both variants of Line 65 (Lawrence Berkeley National Lab and Senior Loop) from its southern terminus in downtown Berkeley along Shattuck to the Bancroft/Durant couplet, then College, then onto Ashby before reaching Emeryville Amtrak via 7th, Folger, Hollis, and 62nd.

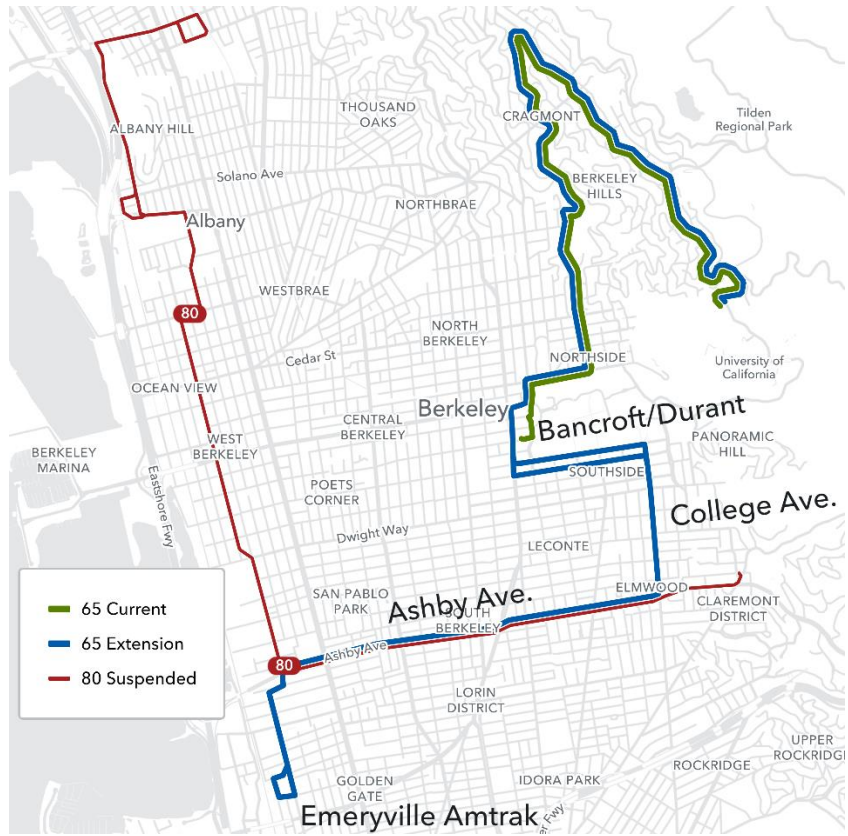
Staff evaluated extending Line 65 to serve the Ashby corridor for a number of reasons:

- It would allow for Ashby to be connected to downtown Berkeley and UC Berkeley, which would create a strong trip generating anchor that Line 80 didn't have.
- It would reduce stress on layover space in downtown Berkeley.
- It would be routed along Bancroft/Durant and College which would increase ridership and reduce crowding on Line 51B.

However, in reviewing this option, staff identified a number of drawbacks:

- The round-trip time for the route would be very long and extending it would require two buses and four operators to implement.
- Line 65 only runs every 40 minutes, which is a lower frequency than should be operated on Ashby. Bringing it to 30 minutes would require significant extra resources.
- The line does not have a layover in the Berkeley hills and so all layover would be in Emeryville, which is a condition staff would like to avoid.
- It generally serves a less disadvantaged population and Line 65 is #21 on the Board-approved list of restoration priorities. Serving Ashby with a pilot would allow Line 65 to be restored ahead of many other lines ahead of it on the list of priorities. The two buses required to implement this option would mean the District would need to wait longer to restore at least Line 99, the next line on the service restoration priorities list.

Exhibit 2 – Line 65 Extension Alternative Map



LINE 67 EXTENSION

This alternative would extend both variants of Line 67 (weekday and weekend) from its southern terminus in downtown Berkeley along Shattuck to the Bancroft/Durant couplet, then College, then onto Ashby before reaching Emeryville Amtrak via 7th, Folger, Hollis, and 62nd.

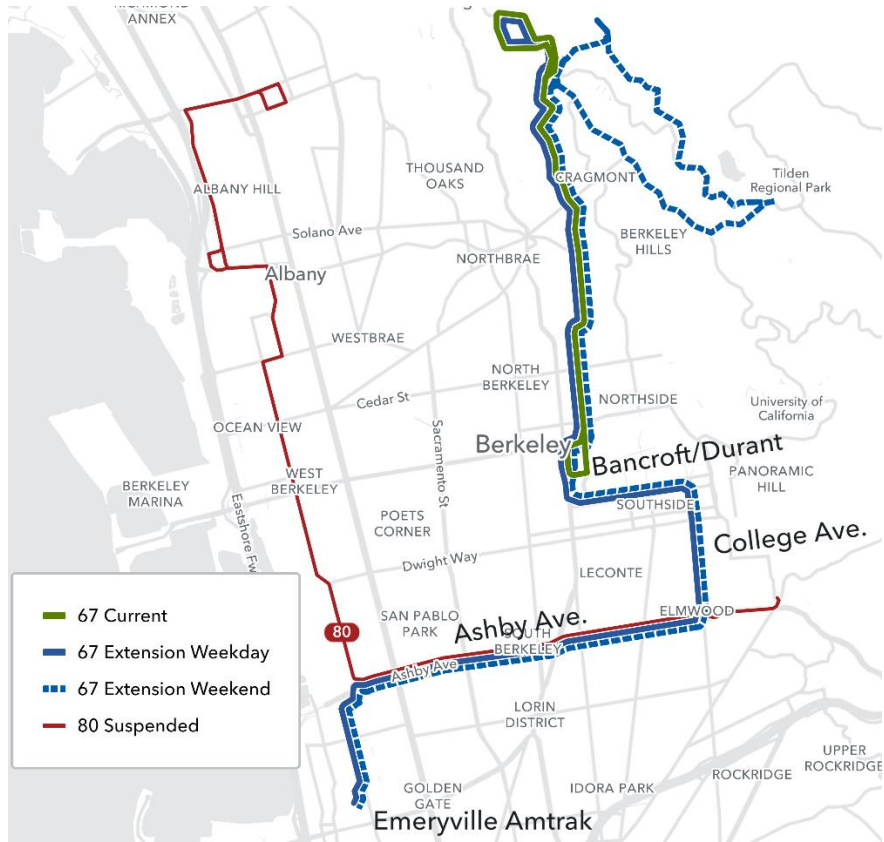
Staff evaluated extending Line 67 to serve the Ashby corridor for a number of reasons:

- It would allow for Ashby to be connected to downtown Berkeley and UC Berkeley, which would create a strong trip generating anchor that Line 80 didn't have.
- It would reduce stress on layover space in downtown Berkeley.
- It would be routed along Bancroft/Durant and College which would increase ridership and reduce crowding on Line 51B.
- It could provide 30-minute service, seven days a week

In reviewing this option, staff identified significant drawbacks:

- The round-trip time for the route would be very long and extending it would require three buses and six operators to implement.
- The line does not have a layover in the Berkeley hills and so all layover would be in Emeryville, which is a condition staff would like to avoid.
- It generally serves a less disadvantaged population and Line 67 is #32 on the Board-approved list of restoration priorities. Serving Ashby with it as a pilot would allow Line 67 to be restored ahead of many other lines ahead of it on the list of priorities. The three buses required to implement this option would mean the District would need to wait longer to restore lines 73 and 99, the next two lines on the service restoration priorities list.

Exhibit 3 – Line 67 Extension Alternative Map

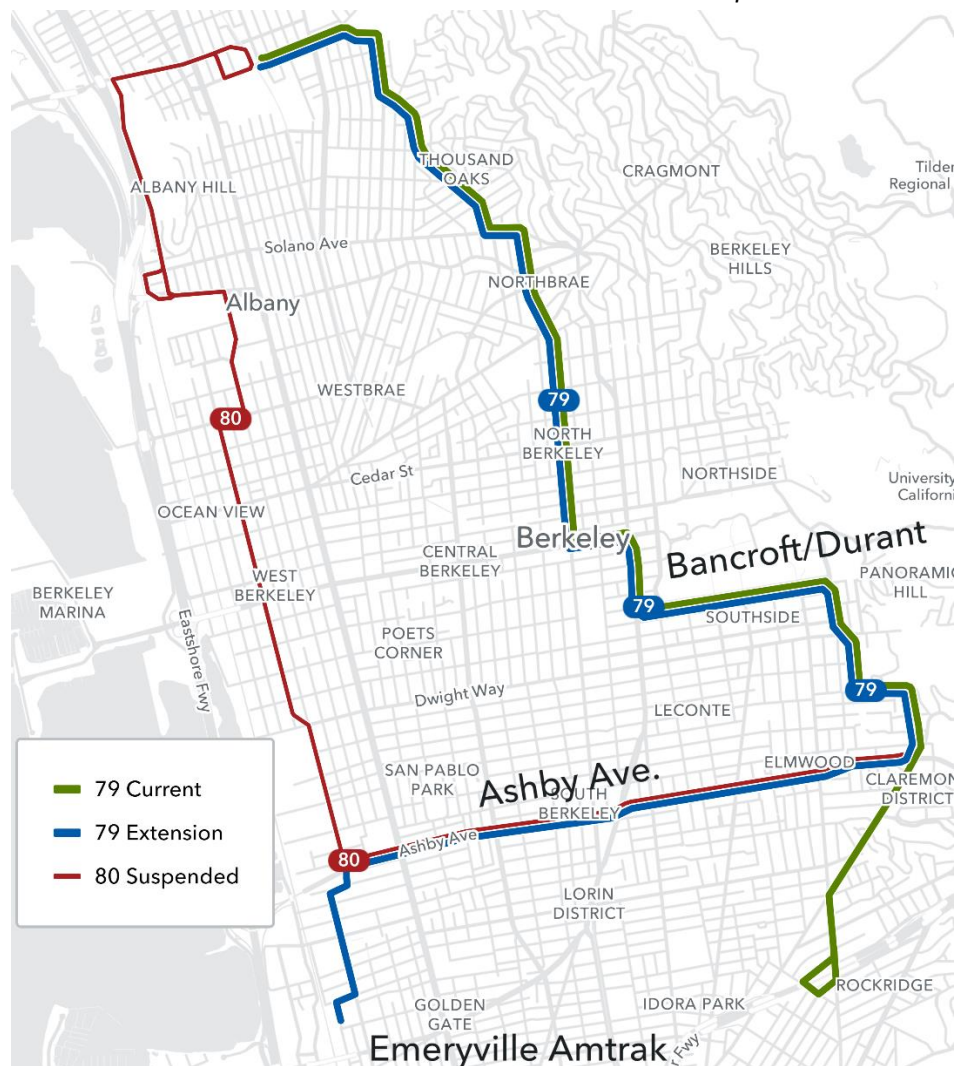


LINE 79 EXTENSION

Line 79 was the original approved pilot extension along Ashby. While it was a compelling idea when initially developed, staff have since discussed the pilot with more stakeholders and identified a number of critical drawbacks:

- While it would allow for Ashby to be connected to downtown Berkeley and UC Berkeley, which would create a strong trip generating anchor, preserving as much of the existing Line 79 alignment as possible would mean a longer round-trip than the 7/65/67 options.
- It would not reduce stress on layover space in downtown Berkeley.
- It would remove service from Claremont between Ashby and College.
- The overall round-trip time would require adding two to three buses.

Exhibit 4 – Line 79 Extension Alternative Map



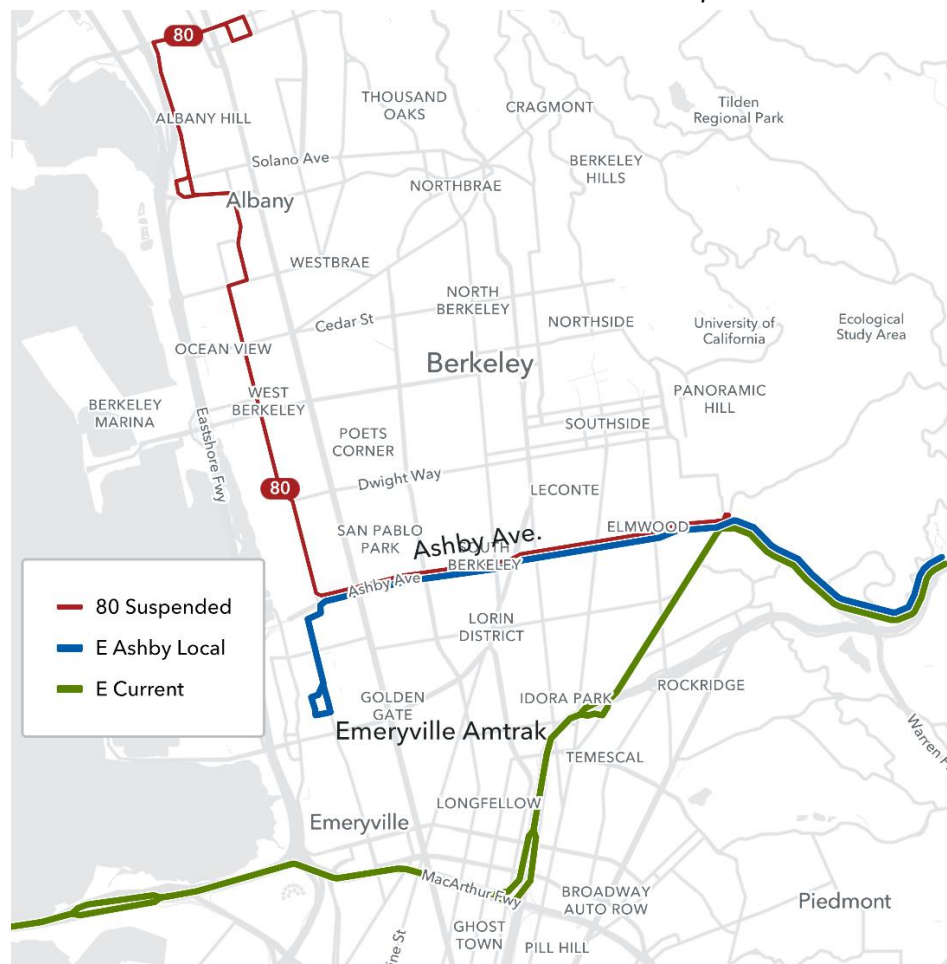
LINE E RECONFIGURATION

One idea brought up in discussions about Ashby would be to reconfigure Line E, which currently serves the Hiller Highlands and Claremont Ave before getting on the freeway to go to San Francisco. The new Line E would start in Hiller Highlands and serve Ashby Ave instead of Claremont and extend to Emeryville Amtrak and no longer serve San Francisco.

Staff evaluated this option and identified a number of key drawbacks that made it unattractive for the purposes of this pilot:

- Local lines – much more than Transbay lines – rely on high-quality layover facilities that includes access to restrooms and potable water. There are no such facilities on Tunnel Rd. at the Line E terminal.
- A key goal of this effort is to not remove service from existing riders to implement the changes. This would convert a Transbay line to local and take service off a significant stretch of Claremont Ave.
- The Line would not serve downtown Berkeley or UC Berkeley and as such would suffer the same problem as Line 80.

Exhibit 5 – Line E Local Alternative Map



NEW ASHBY-ONLY LINE

Staff also evaluated whether it would be feasible to launch a new line that would operate between Emeryville Amtrak and downtown Berkeley. Operationally, there is no available layover space for additional buses in downtown Berkeley so staff identified Line 36 as an interline opportunity. However, there is no current layover for Line 36 operators, who take all their layover in West Oakland. Adding an interline with a new line would mean operators would have an extremely long run without a layover.

Exhibit 6 – New Line Alternative Map



PROPOSED SERVICE CUTS

Staff identified three lines within the same general service area as Ashby Avenue that could have service reduced in order to cumulatively free up buses and operators to operate new service along Ashby. It is critical to note staff is also currently working to address and operator shortage and resolve runtime and layover issues brought by ATU and using these service cuts to pay for Ashby service would impact the District's ability to right-size the network to the number of operators actually available for service.

Line 12

Line 12 currently operates every 20 minutes between West Berkeley and Jack London Square via downtown Berkeley, Piedmont Avenue, and Grand Lake. Staff proposes reducing the frequency from 20 minutes to 23 minutes, which would save one bus and two operators each day. The current ridership on the line doesn't require the current level of service and a cut would not result in significant crowding.

Lines 65 and 67

Line 65 currently operates every 40 minutes between Grizzly Peak and downtown Berkeley. Line 67 currently operates every 30 minutes between Tilden Park and downtown Berkeley. Staff proposes reducing the frequency from 30 minutes to about 40 minutes on Line 67 and interlining the two routes in downtown Berkeley so the bus would alternate trips between the two lines. This would save one bus and two operators each day. The current ridership on the lines doesn't require the current level of service and a cut would not result in significant crowding.

Line 79

Line 79 currently operates every 30 minutes between El Cerrito Plaza BART and Rockridge BART via Colusa and downtown Berkeley. Staff proposes reducing the frequency from 30 minutes to 34 minutes, which would save one bus and two operators each day. The current ridership on the line doesn't require the current level of service and a cut would not result in significant crowding.

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES AND SERVICE CUTS

The exhibit below illustrates the current and proposed headways, ridership, and needed or saved bus operators for each proposal.

Exhibit 7 – Service Alternative Summary

| Line | Current Headway (minutes) | Proposed Headway (minutes) | Savings/Cost (Buses/Operators) | Pre-Pandemic | | Current | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
| | | | | Weekday Ridership | Passengers/ Hour | Weekday Ridership | Passengers/ Hour | |
| Proposed Alternatives | 7 | 30 | 30 | +3/+6 | 817 | 16.6 | 448 | 13.2 |
| | 65 | 40 | 40 | +2/+4 | 918 | 30.2 | 326 | 13.9 |
| | 67 | 30 | 30 | +3/+6 | 477 | 21.2 | 334 | 14.7 |
| | 79 | 30 | 30 | +4/+8 | 2,572 | 40.4 | 2,018 | 30.4 |
| | Ashby-Only | 0 | 30 | +2/+4 | 400 | 20.0 | - | - |
| | Line E | Varies | 30 | 0 | 489 | 55.6 | 110 | 17.5 |
| | Line 80 | 0 | 20 | +5/+10 | 1,005 | 12.7 | - | - |
| Proposed Cuts | 12 | 20 | 30 | -1/-2 | 2,902 | 23.3 | 2,023 | 15.0 |
| | 65/67 | 40/30 | 40 | -1/-2 | See above | See above | See above | See above |
| | 79 | 30 | 34 | -1/-2 | 2,572 | 40.4 | 2,018 | 30.4 |