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Alameda Contra-Costa Transit District  
1600 Franklin Avenue  
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Submitted Electronically

December 11, 2023

Subject: AC Transit Realign – Lines 6 and 51

Dear AC Transit Board Members:

Under the new Realign service scenarios, there are proposals brought forth to reunify the 51A and 51B, establishing the 51 line. This combined line would include the 51A service from Fruitvale BART to the 51B service to Downtown Berkeley, while discontinuing service from Downtown Berkeley to the Berkeley Marina. This service gap is intended to be filled by line 6, which follows Telegraph Avenue, extends to the UC Berkeley campus, proceeds toward Downtown Berkeley, and then continues west to the Berkeley Marina.

As Staff Advisor and Chair of the UC Berkeley Class Pass Student Oversight Committee (CPOC), our approach to *ReAlign*, within our committee, is to ensure effective and streamlined service to and from the campus. We recognize within the committee the importance of the existing lines 6 and 51B as critical routes which support the nearly 20,000 students who use the pass every day; and support through the CPOC to ensure that changes are equitable and fair to them.

**We support the proposed changes in all three proposed scenarios to Lines 6 and 51, including the reunification of Lines 51A and 51B, and the switching of terminals of both routes.** Supporting the changes will improve both access and equity for the campus and the community at large, for the following reasons:

- **Equity:** Eliminating the forced transfer at Rockridge BART for 51A and 51B users would provide uninterrupted one-seat rides, reducing additional personal expenses (both in money for forced transfers and time lost) incurred when transfers are missed. It also offers a more convenient one-seat ride for individuals, especially those with mobility issues, and eliminates the hassle of the transfer and costs of missed transfers.

Missed transfers at Rockridge, because of the design of the station and the crosswalks, may result in longer waits. If there is a missed trip on either side of the route, we are concerned that waits may be longer and opportunities for access may be jeopardized. CPOC supports streamlining the route in its entirety from Fruitvale BART, Alameda, Downtown Oakland, and the UC Berkeley campus. Missed transfers and paying an extra fare is an equity concern amongst riders and should be considered within the final draft plan.

- **Increased Ridership:** Eliminating the forced transfer at Rockridge, along with the proposed service frequency enhancements detailed in the Frequency Proposal, could increase ridership for

a unified Line 51. This change has the potential to particularly benefit ridership among students and residents living to the south of Rockridge Station along the current line 51A. The same argument can be said with Line 6. Riders have the option to take either route from Downtown Oakland or continuing riders through West Berkeley will be given the same option with the same service levels.

While not every rider is a through-rider, from terminal to terminal, we must consider the continuity of rides along Lines 6 and 51 without sacrificing additional wait times on the rider.

- **Optimal access to Campus:** Switching terminals for Lines 6 and 51 should allow for improved access to the Northside of campus. The CPOC wants AC Transit Board and Staff to consider optimal transfers to other AC Transit and Bear Transit services at Downtown Berkeley, but also to campus-bound Line 52 routes to campus along Hearst. Both routes, with swapped terminals, should have connections to other services along the Northside.

Additionally, a unified Line 51 can support a “show up and go” approach where a rider from a BART train can

We do request that the final plan incorporates moving the proposed Line 51 terminal from the current Line 6 at University Hall (Oxford & Addison) to the Current Line F terminal at Hearst & Shattuck, behind the Berkeley Way West building. Parking & Transportation staff will work with City of Berkeley and Berkeley Way Building staff to ensure access to the building for drivers whenever possible.

The CPOC recognizes the risk to the on-time performance both routes, for the reasons below. While we understand that route length may pose such a risk, we feel that it should not outweigh the benefits of services. AC Transit Board Members and Staff should continue to work with the Cities of Berkeley, Oakland, and Alameda to prioritize transit riders and ensure that treatments to the built environment reflect supporting bus movements for both routes.

- **Reliability concerns:** Berkeley’s CPOC recognizes the possible risk to service delivery and on-time performance with the swapping of the terminals. Lengthy route times without support or treatments to prevent that risk can be problematic to the riders and drivers. As stated previously, we ask that Staff continue working with City Officials to implement treatments such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP), improved bus stop amenities such as lighting, and active management of buses on-route to ensure a safe and quick ride.
- **Potential loss of service to the Marina:** UC Berkeley’s Recreational Sports Units have raised concerns about a reduction in service between the Central Campus and the Marina. While the proposal to Line 12 would cover loss of service to the Marina, they have large concerns about a forced transfer as well as a frequency loss. We agree – as this is also an equity concern – crosstown service should not be lost to those riders needing to access stops West of Interstate 80.

**We do, however, propose that the District in the final draft that:**

- o Line 6 operates 30-minute headways to the Marina in addition to the proposed extension of Line 12 from West Berkeley along Sixth Street. Coverage of crosstown service would be retained along with the proposed extension of Line 12 would be able to accommodate those student riders to the Marina, connecting with weekday service roughly every 15 minutes to Sixth Street.

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- If Line 12 isn't extended to the Marina, we propose that the District should operate Line 6 weekdays every 20 minutes to the Marina, the same levels of service being offered by current Line 51B.
  
- **Overcrowding:** Both Lines 6 and 51B have crowding issues throughout the school year. there could be a future consideration for introducing articulated buses on this line to help either route with capacity issues throughout the route.

The CPOC recognizes the ongoing trade-offs with the proposals. We encourage Staff and the Board to continue engaging with the campus, including the CPOC. We would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and please contact me with any questions. We look forward to working with the District to promote equitable and accessible services throughout UC Berkeley.

Sincerely,



David Sorrell, TDM-CP

Transportation Demand Management Administrator and Acting Principal Mobility Planner

Cc:

Luke Matsui and Victoria Saad-Matiere, Student Chairs, Class Pass Advisory Committee  
Elijah Burckin and Linsy Damashek, Student Chairs, Mobility and Equity Committee