

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 9/11/2024

Staff Report No. 23-250j

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

ACTION ITEM

AGENDA PLANNING REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Hold public hearings to receive public comment on the Realign Draft Final Network Plan.

Staff Contact:

Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

Holding public hearings will allow the Board to receive and consider public comments on the Realign Draft Final Network Plan before staff proposes adoption of related service changes in October 2024. If the Board votes to adopt a plan in October following this public hearing process, service changes could begin to be implemented as soon as March 2025. The proposed service changes in the Realign Draft Final Network Plan are designed to adjust AC Transit's bus network in response to post-pandemic changes to transit needs in the communities AC Transit serves.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

The Realign Draft Final Network Plan is designed to maintain service levels at 85% of pre-pandemic levels, while keeping bus operator counts at today's levels. As staffing levels increase, new service focused on a Priority Transit Network would be implemented as part of Realign+, a package of service improvements that would get AC Transit back up to 100% of pre-pandemic service levels. AC Transit's Fiscal Year 2024-45 budget is based on 85% of pre-pandemic service level and associated bus operator staffing.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On Wednesday, August 7, 2024, the Board voted to hold hybrid (in-person and via Zoom) Public Hearings regarding the Realign Draft Final Network Plan on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., at AC Transit's General Office. The Board also called to two remote (Zoom-only) Public Hearings led by staff on September 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. and September 10, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. The Public Hearings will also cover

comments regarding service on new street segments associated with the Draft Final Network Plan, as listed in Attachments 2, 8, and 14.

The Public Hearings cover service changes included in the proposed network plan for implementation as early as March 2025, as well as subsequent potential service increases associated with Realign+ (Plus), as detailed in Attachment 1. Realign+ is the District's plan for adding service to reach 100 percent of pre-pandemic service levels as bus operator hiring continues and the number of bus operators available for service trends upward, assuming funding availability to support it.

The Draft Final Network Plan represents the outcome of a multi-phased planning and public participation process that started in Spring 2023. It proposes the introduction of new bus lines, and consolidation, elimination, and adjustments to others. Staff and the consultant team led by Kittelson and Associates have reviewed the input received on the service scenarios during Phase 3 of the planning process in the Fall/Winter of 2023 and during the first part of Phase 4 in Spring of 2024. The Realign Draft Final Plan incorporates work and findings from all analysis and public outreach and engagement conducted to-date through the close of this most recent outreach period on June 5, 2024.

Revisions since the May 2024 - Key differences between the attached Realign Draft Final Network Plan and the Draft Plan put forward at the June 5 Special Board meeting include:

- Line 6 is no longer proposed to extend into Alameda and instead would retain the current routing in service today. This change was made based on feedback from the public and bus operators about the previously proposed Line 6/51 changes.
- Line 7 is no longer proposed to serve the Emeryville Amtrak station and instead would end at Christie and 64th, traveling between downtown Berkeley and Emeryville via Shattuck, Adeline, Stanford, Powell, and Christie. This change is a result of bus turning movement tests in the field and layover capacity constraints.
- Line 19 is no longer proposed to extend to Kaiser Hospital and Piedmont Avenue. The line would instead end in downtown Oakland on its west end and Fruitvale BART on its east end. With 51A service from Alameda to Kaiser retained, the need for this connection is lessened.
- Line 20 is no longer proposed to operate further into Alameda Point. Line 20 would operate on Atlantic, Pan Am Way, and Midway in response to public feedback and the results of bus turning movement tests in the field.
- Line 21 is now proposed to provide trips with end-points that alternate between Skyline High School and the Chabot Space & Science Center during the day on weekdays, with all trips going to the Chabot Space & Science Center on weekends. This would preserve access for students and staff traveling to Skyline High School on weekdays while improving community access throughout the week to the Chabot Space & Science Center, as well as outdoor recreation space at Joaquin Miller Park, the Roberts Regional Recreation Area, and Redwood Regional Park. The proposed change would also improve operator restroom access, with proposed restroom facilities at the Chabot Center and adjacent to Skyline High School. Following field test results, the alignment on the other end of the route would change so that buses turn around via Mecartney Road, Island Drive, Maitland Drive, and again on Mecartney Road in Alameda. Routing through the Dimond District would be modified to match the existing Line 39 alignment and improve transfer opportunities, traveling via Fruitvale Avenue,

Macarthur Blvd, and Lincoln Avenue rather than via Fruitvale Avenue, Harold Street, and Lincoln Avenue.

- Line 29 is now proposed to end in downtown Berkeley rather than at the Rockridge BART station, as preserving lines 51A and 51B as they exist today requires use of the limited layover space that was intended for the Line 29 extension. Line 29 also would no longer operate along 65th Street as test bus trips revealed safe right turns from Hollis Street onto 65th Street would require additional infrastructure changes. Line 29 would instead operate in both directions via Hollis Street, Powell Street, Stanford Avenue, Market Street/Sacramento Street, Alcatraz Avenue, College Avenue, Bancroft Way/Durant Ave, and Oxford Street.
- Lines 51A and 51B are no longer proposed to be consolidated and would retain their current routing in service today. This change reflects public and operator feedback. In addition, a longer Line 51 service would require more substantial transit priority treatments, traffic and parking enforcement from partner jurisdictions, and/or consistent line management practices to ensure reliable operation.
- Lines 73 and 805 are now proposed to be modified based on field testing and public and operator feedback. Traveling towards the San Francisco Bay Oakland International Airport, buses would operate via Hegenberger Road, Hamilton Street, 63rd Avenue, Hawley Street, 61st Avenue, Snell Street, 69th Avenue, and San Leandro Street. Traveling towards the Eastmont Transit Center, buses would operate as they do today.

More detail on all specific proposals is included in Attachment 2, 8, and 14 in English, Spanish, and Chinese, and is available on the project website at actransit.org/realign. The website also includes data about the current system and background data about the proposals.

The Draft Final Network Plan reflects an ongoing commitment by the District to listen to its riders, communities, bus operators, and labor partners to incorporate their feedback, and to forge a reliable network that meets the needs of the communities, with a keen eye on improved service reliability. The Draft Final Network Plan represents a strong starting point for a future network upon which the District can add service as more operators and funding become available. With the right routing in place, the District will be able to scale up frequency to pre-pandemic service levels according to the framework included in the attachments.

The proposed plan assumes that frequencies of individual lines may be adjusted after final Board adoption of the new service network by as much as five minutes based on layover constraints and real-world operating conditions as staff implements the plan.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Holding Public Hearings allows the project team to keep the project on schedule and allows for formal input on the Draft Final Network Plan for the Board to consider prior to proposed adoption of a Final Network Plan in October.

Staff has identified no disadvantages with holding the Public Hearing at this point in the Realign planning process.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

The Board could choose to not hold the Public Hearings, which would delay the Board's timeline for adoption

of a final plan beyond October 2024, and delay implementation beyond March 2025.

This alternative is not recommended, given staff's broad messaging to the community, including formal public notices about the opportunity to provide public comment and attend the public hearings themselves. To move forward with any Major Service Change as defined in AC Transit Board Policy 544, the Board must hold public hearings in line with Board Policy 110.

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
SR 23-250f Set Public Hearings: Realign Draft Final Plan Proposal
SR 23-250g AC Transit Realign Phase 4: Updates and Key Decision Points
SR 22-502a AC Transit Realign Timeline Extension and Change Order Approval for Realign Consultant Services
SR 23-250h Realign Draft Plan Workshop
SR 23-250i Set Public Hearings: Realign Draft Final Network Plan
Board Policy 110 - Public Hearing Process for the Board of Directors
Board Policy 544 - Service Adjustments

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Hearing Notice (English, Spanish & Chinese)
2. Realign Draft Final Network Plan Matrix (English, Spanish & Chinese)
3. Table of Proposed New Streets (English, Spanish & Chinese)
4. Staff Presentation (English, Spanish & Chinese)
5. Map of Discontinued Segments (English, Spanish & Chinese)

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