

A background graphic showing a stylized map with various colored lines (blue, red, purple) representing transit routes. Overlaid on the map are two purple navigation icons: a right-pointing triangle and a left-pointing triangle, with a vertical line between them.

# Realign

## **AC Transit Realign**

## **Phase 4 Public Hearings Engagement Report**

August – September 2024



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## Executive Summary

AC Transit Realign (Realign) is a comprehensive review of the existing service network to understand current rider needs and travel patterns. The goal is to create a bus network to be implemented as early as March 2025 that better meets community needs under existing resource constraints. The first phases of the project solicited broad input from the community on their priorities, concerns, and visions for the AC Transit system, which were used to draft the three guiding principles of Equity, Reliability, and Frequency. Using these guiding principles, AC Transit developed three draft service scenarios: the Balanced Coverage Scenario, the Frequent Service Scenario, and the Unconstrained Vision Scenario. Phase 3 solicited extensive input on these draft scenarios to understand what the community liked and disliked about the proposed changes.

Phase 3 input was used to develop a single Draft Plan which addresses current ridership needs and community priorities of equity, reliability, and frequency. Phase 4 of outreach brought this plan to the public in two parts: the initial period of Phase 4 informed the public of the Draft Plan and solicited community feedback, while the second period consisted of a public comment process on the Draft Final Plan through public hearings. This report summarizes the second period of Phase 4 outreach, which formally presented the Draft Final Plan to the community and provided a final opportunity for public comment from communities and stakeholders in the service area.

Outreach activities were planned to ensure feedback was solicited and documented from a broad range of audiences. Community events, presentations, and four formal public hearings were directed towards the public, while a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) meeting ensured that AC Transit heard from community members representing the voices of historically underserved populations spanning across our service area.

The second period of Phase 4 outreach on the Draft Final Plan was conducted from August 2, 2024, through September 11, 2024. During this period, the Realign Outreach team conducted 44 outreach activities, including community events and council presentations, with 1,248 touchpoints recorded across the AC Transit service area. In total, the District received 580 public comments. The Final Network Plan will be presented to and voted on by the AC Transit Board on October 9, 2024, which will lead to new service implementation as early as March 2025.

See attached appendices following the conclusion section of this report for a summary of all comments received.



## Outreach Process and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The second period of Phase 4 outreach leveraged AC Transit’s communication channels, including the project webpage, eNews, and social media networks, to inform stakeholders and the public about opportunities to provide input on the Draft Final Plan. The project webpage was a central location for outreach information and included details on the Draft Final Plan and upcoming public hearings. AC Transit also leveraged collateral on buses and on digital sign boards at bus platforms, transit centers, and the Customer Service Center to increase awareness of the public hearings. To keep people informed throughout the comment period, AC Transit posted information about upcoming outreach opportunities on their social media channels and bought digital advertising to increase its reach.

The following is an overview of outreach efforts during the second period of Phase 4, with key performance indicators (KPIs) illustrating the range of activities and engagement accomplished.

### I. Digital / Print Engagement

- A. AC Transit Website
  - 1. Realign Page Views: 9,079
  - 2. Page Rank: 5<sup>th</sup> highest on the District website (after ACT Real Time, Home, Maps & Schedules, and Fare pages)
- B. AC Transit eNews: three newsletters (sent August 8, August 21, and September 3) detailing upcoming Phase 4 public hearings and how to provide input were sent to more than 22,000 recipients, which included policymakers, CBOs, and the public.
  - 1. Unique Opens: 15,125
  - 2. Total Opens: 22,339
  - 3. Total Clicks: 1,513
- C. Social Media: images and promotions via AC Transit’s social media channels
  - 1. Social Media Performance (Impressions/Engagements): 19,210
- D. Online survey comments: 464
- E. Phone line comments: 8
- F. Email comments: 44
- G. Library Pop-Ups: 20
  - 1. Comment cards received: 21
- H. Letter comments: 6
- I. Digital/Print/Radio Ads/Banners
  - 1. Total Impressions: 871,517
  - 2. Total Clicks: 702

**Share your feedback on proposed bus line changes!**  
 ¡Comparta su opinión sobre los cambios propuestos en las líneas de autobús!  
 请分享您对公交线路变更建议的反馈意见!

**Share Your Feedback on Proposed Bus Line Changes!**

We are pleased to announce that the AC Transit Board of Directors have set four Realign public hearing dates in September and have opened the public comment period for the Draft Final Plan.

You can give input on the Realign Draft Final Plan online by email, US Mail, telephone, or at a local library through September 11!

**We will also host public hearings on September 9, 10, and 11.**

¡Puede dar su opinión sobre el borrador final del plan de Realign en línea, por correo electrónico, correo postal, teléfono o en una biblioteca local hasta el 11 de septiembre!

**También organizaremos audiencias públicas los días 9, 10 y 11 de septiembre.**

在9月11日之前，您可以通过在线、电子邮件、美国邮政、电话或当地图书馆对“Realign 最终计划草案”反馈意见！我们将于9月9日、10日和11日举办公众听证会。

[actransit.org/realign](http://actransit.org/realign)

@actransit

Sample online and print notifications

## II. In-person / Virtual Engagement

- J. Total Events: 44
  - 1. Touchpoints across all events: 1,248
- K. Community Events: 15
  - 1. Touchpoints: 718
- L. LEAG Meeting: 1
  - 1. Participants: 5
- M. Presentations and Announcements: 24
  - 1. Touchpoints: 488
- N. Public Hearings: 4
  - 1. Comments received: 37

## III. Paid Media Campaign

In addition to organic digital and print engagement like AC Transit newsletters, social media channels, and the website, the project team conducted a paid media advertising campaign to further promote the public hearings and final opportunities to provide input. This campaign was conducted across digital, print, and radio outlets, in different languages, and was estimated to have earned more than 870,000 impressions. An overview of this campaign, including media outlets used, frequency of advertisement, and audience targeted, is summarized in the tables below (Pages 6-7).



| <b>Digital Media (Campaign Period: August 12-September 11)</b> |                  |  |                          |                      |                        |
|--|------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Media Outlet</b>  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Audience</b>  | <b>Impressions</b>       | <b>Clicks</b>        | <b>Click-thru-Rate</b> |
| Cityside:<br>Berkeleyside/Oaklandside/Richmondside             | Daily            | Berkeley,<br>Oakland,<br>Richmond  | 105,947<br>(website)     | 184<br>(website)     | 0.17%<br>(website)     |
|  |                  |  | 196,314<br>(newsletters) | 341<br>(newsletters) | 0.17%<br>(newsletters) |
| AlamedaPost.com  | Daily            | Alameda  | 34,308                   | 16                   | 0.05%                  |
| EastBayTimes.com   | Daily            | East Bay<br>Community<br>(Alameda<br>County and<br>Western<br>Contra<br>Costa<br>County) | 175,002                  | 161                  | 0.09%                  |
| News for Chinese   | Daily            | East Bay<br>Chinese  | 128,435                  | N/A                  | N/A                    |
| <b>Total</b>   |                  |  | <b>640,006</b>           | <b>702</b>           | <b>0.11%</b>           |

| <b>Print Media (Campaign Period: August 12-September 11)</b>   |   |   |                                |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Media Outlet</b>  | <b>Frequency<br/>(Campaign Period)</b>            | <b>Audience</b>   | <b>Impressions (estimated)</b> |
| East Bay Times Weeklies:<br>Alameda Journal, Fremont<br>Argus, Hayward Daily<br>Review, Oakland Tribune,<br>Piedmonter, Montclarion,<br>Berkeley Voice/El Cerrito<br>Journal | Fridays   | East Bay Community  | 51,911                         |
| Oakland Post   | Wednesdays  | Oakland Black Elders  | 18,300                         |
| Castro Valley Forum  | Wednesdays  | Castro Valley, San Leandro,<br>Hayward                                | 20,000                         |
| News for Chinese   | 1 <sup>st</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> of the month | East Bay Chinese  | 20,000                         |
| Sing Tao Daily   | Daily   | Bay Area Chinese  | 60,000                         |
| El Mundo   | Thursday  | Oakland Hispanic<br>Community   | 1,300                          |
| Vision Hispana   | Twice a month/Fridays                             | East Bay Hispanic<br>Community (Alameda,<br>Fremont, Hayward, Newark, | 10,000                         |



|              |  |  |         |
|--------------|--|--|---------|
|              |  | Oakland, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Union City) |         |
| <b>Total</b> |  |  | 181,511 |

| <b>Radio</b>        |                  |                                |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Media Outlet</b> | <b>Audience</b>  | <b>Impressions (estimated)</b> |
| KEST, AM 1450       | East Bay Chinese | 50,000                         |
| <b>Total</b>        | 50,000           |                                |

#### **IV. CBO and Partner Engagement**

Updates on the Realign process were shared with all ten CBO partners, promoting the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Final Plan. CBO partners were asked to help raise awareness and notify their communities about the second period of Phase 4, including information about the public hearings; the project team also offered promotional newsletters and other informational materials to support these notification efforts.

As a result of this outreach, the project team provided take ones and fact sheets in English and Spanish to Cherryland Community Association, located in the urban, unincorporated area of Alameda County, and in English and Chinese to the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, primarily located in downtown Oakland, for distribution with their constituents and surrounding community members.

#### **V. Community Events**

Fifteen community pop-ups were held at local community events across the service area, achieving 718 touchpoints with community members. Pop-ups allowed the project team to meet current and prospective riders where they were to inform them of the Draft Final Plan, how to provide input, and upcoming public hearings. The following table showcases the location, date, ward, and number of touchpoints for each pop-up; pop-ups where few touchpoints are listed reflect occasions where promotional materials were shared but there was less opportunity for in-depth conversation.

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Location</b>               | <b>Ward</b> | <b>Touchpoints</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 8/6/2024    | Horner Middle School Maze Day | 5           | 1                  |
| 8/7/2024    | Bret Harte Middle School      | 4, 5        | 2                  |
| 8/7/2024    | Horner Middle School Maze Day | 5           | 0                  |

|           |   |      |     |
|-----------|---|------|-----|
| 8/8/2024  | Dejean Middle School Walkthrough Registration | 1    | 0   |
| 8/9/2024  | Dejean Middle School Walkthrough Registration | 1    | 0   |
| 8/10/2024 | Laurel Street Fair                            | 3    | 2   |
| 8/10/2024 | Supply Bank Backpack Giveaway                 | 1, 2 | 100 |
| 8/13/2024 | Martin Luther King Middle School Welcome Fair | 5    | 30  |
| 8/15/2024 | Betty Reid Soskin Middle School Welcome Fair  | 1    | 1   |
| 8/15/2024 | Downtown Hayward Street Party                 | 4, 5 | 138 |
| 8/18/2024 | Festival of the Globe – India Day Parade      | 5    | 6   |
| 8/24/2024 | Oakland Chinatown StreetFest                  | 2    | 60  |
| 9/7/2024  | Castro Valley Fall Festival                   | 4    | 150 |
| 9/8/2024  | Solano Stroll                                 | 1    | 200 |
| 9/8/2024  | Oakland Pride Parade and Festival             | 2, 3 | 28  |



*Dejean Middle School Walkthrough Registration, 8/8/24*



*Oakland Pride Parade and Festival, 9/8/24*





## VI. Presentations and Announcements

To inform and promote input from jurisdictions and their constituents in the service area, AC Transit provided Realign announcements on the Draft Final Plan to city councils, municipal advisory councils (MAC), and other local committees, achieving 488 touchpoints. These announcements were given in standing meetings that included elected officials and other stakeholders; input received from attendees is included in the following Community Input section. A complete list of local jurisdiction announcements given during the second period of Phase 4 is included in the table below:

| Date      | Location  | Ward | Touchpoints |
|-----------|---|------|-------------|
| 8/7/2024  | BART Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC) Meeting                  | All  | 10          |
| 8/13/2024 | Eden Area Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC)                      | 4    | 20          |
| 8/14/2024 | El Sobrante MAC   | 1    | 10          |
| 8/16/2024 | Alameda County Supervisor Tam's Office Presentation               | 3    | 2           |
| 8/19/2024 | Mayor of Oakland's Commission on Persons with Disabilities (MCPD) | 2, 3 | 14          |
| 8/19/2024 | Piedmont City Council   | 2    | 34          |
| 8/20/2024 | El Cerrito City Council   | 1    | 17          |
| 8/21/2024 | East Richmond Heights MAC   | 1    | 12          |
| 8/26/2024 | Castro Valley MAC   | 4    | 18          |
| 9/3/2024  | East Bay Paratransit Access Committee (EBPAC)                     | All  | 16          |
| 9/3/2024  | San Pablo City Council  | 1    | 30          |
| 9/3/2024  | North Richmond MAC  | 1    | 20          |
| 9/3/2024  | Hayward City Council  | 4, 5 | 0           |
| 9/3/2024  | Alameda City Council  | 3    | 20          |
| 9/3/2024  | Fremont City Council  | 5    | 34          |



|           |   |      |    |
|-----------|---|------|----|
| 9/3/2024  | Albany City Council                       | 1    | 15 |
| 9/4/2024  | City of Oakland ILC                       | All  | 20 |
| 9/5/2024  | City of Alameda ILC                       | 3    | 25 |
| 9/6/2024  | City of Hayward ILC                       | 4, 5 | 15 |
| 9/9/2024  | San Leandro City Council                  | 3, 4 | 0  |
| 9/10/2024 | General Manager's Access Committee (GMAC) | All  | 16 |
| 9/10/2024 | Berkeley City Council                     | 1, 2 | 80 |
| 9/10/2024 | Richmond City Council                     | 1    | 50 |
| 9/10/2024 | City of Oakland Public Works Committee    | 2    | 10 |

ILC = Interagency Liaison Committee (Standing public meetings between AC Transit and Cities)

## VII. LEAG Meeting

The LEAG meeting in the second period of Phase 4 was held on Saturday, August 10 to present the Draft Final Plan and provide LEAG members with a final opportunity to share their feedback. All five LEAG members, representing each of the five Wards, attended.

After a presentation to review the Draft Final Plan, LEAG members discussed questions and comments with the project team. In general, LEAG members were supportive of the changes, appreciating the increased frequency, the addition of weekend service, efforts to improve service reliability, and recognized the tough tradeoffs associated with the plan.

For line-specific feedback, a LEAG member suggested adding additional stops on line 35 for frequently visited and highly trafficked destinations. Another LEAG member suggested keeping line 215 and instead transitioning line 212 to micro-transit due to its connections with Milpitas BART Station.

There were also concerns expressed with overall system reliability; some LEAG members reported buses arriving much earlier or later than scheduled and suggested improving schedule updates on the AC Transit app to better reflect these real-time changes. LEAG members believed addressing these concerns would help make public transit more effective and could further incentivize the use of buses over cars.



### VIII. Legal Noticing

As part of the public hearing process and required under Board Policy 110, legal noticing was conducted with information about how to join the public hearings, how to submit public comments, and the proposed service changes. Noticing was distributed to local news outlets and completed in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese; a list of noticing dates and associated outlets is included in the table below:

| Outlet  | Dates                     |
|---|---------------------------|
| Post News Group (Oakland Post and El Mundo Oakland)   | 8/16, 8/23, 8/30, and 9/6 |
| Bay Area News Group (Fremont Argus, Oakland Tribune, Hayward Daily Review, Alameda Times-Star, and West County Times) | 8/23, 8/30, and 9/6       |
| Sing Tao Daily (Chinese)  | 8/21, 8/28 and 9/4        |

In addition to news outlets, the multi-lingual public hearing notice was emailed to the municipal clerks of City Councils, County Boards of Supervisors, and school and college districts within the AC Transit service area on August 20 and 21.

### IX. Public Hearings

Four public hearings were held virtually or in a hybrid format to present the Draft Final Plan, review public engagement activities, introduce Realign+, and present the final proposed changes to the service network. These public hearings were held over three days and varied in time and format per the following table:

|                   | Date            | Location                    | Speakers |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Public Hearing #1 | 9/9/2024, 6 pm  | Virtual, Zoom               | 5        |
| Public Hearing #2 | 9/10/2024, 9 am | Virtual, Zoom               | 5        |
| Public Hearing #3 | 9/11/2024, 2 pm | Hybrid, Zoom and Board Room | 9        |
| Public Hearing #4 | 9/11/2024, 6 pm | Hybrid, Zoom and Board Room | 18       |

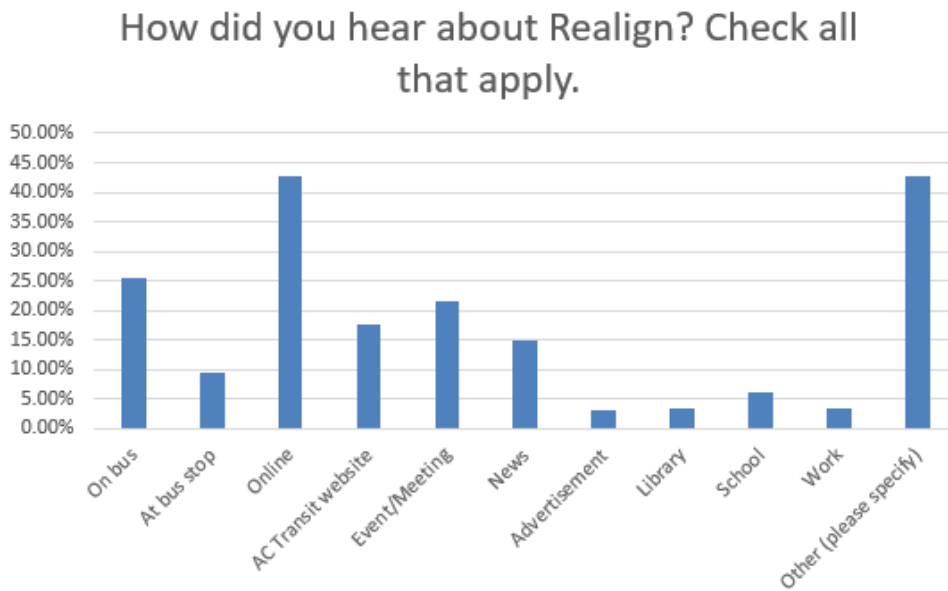


There were 37 public comments received from the community across the four public hearings, which were documented in the hearing record and will be submitted to the Board of Directors for consideration along with comments received from other channels. The hearings were delivered in English with closed captions in 35+ languages and with live Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese interpretation available online and onsite. The public hearings were also recorded and uploaded to the Realign project page for community members to view and reference.

The moderation and presentation of the public hearings were provided by Senior Transportation Planner/Realign Project Manager David Berman, Service Planning Manager Michael Eshleman, and External Affairs Representative/Realign Deputy Project Manager Diann Castleberry. Comments heard at the public hearings are incorporated into the Community Input section.

### X. Community Notification

In the second period of Phase 4, data was collected about how community members learned of Realign and the project’s opportunities to provide input. Of the options provided, the three most common notification sources were online (43%), on a bus (25%), and at an event or meeting (22%).



In the free response option, 43% of respondents provided further information about how they were notified of Realign. The most common free responses included notification through word of mouth, social media channels (primarily Facebook and Nextdoor), email newsletters from AC Transit and policymakers, and community outreach events.



## **XI. Community Input**

Community input collected during the second period of Phase 4 was received via the online feedback form, via formal letters, email, phone, library comment cards, and at in-person/virtual engagement events. This data is being used by the project team to fine tune the Draft Final Plan before the Final Network Plan is presented to the Board for approval. All comments received are provided in the attached appendix.

In general, community comments expressed concerns about long wait times for buses, scheduled connections with other buses or transit, and reliability of service. Almost all comments were line-specific: the most commented lines were DF7 (with 164 comments), DF67 (with 99 comments), DF65 (with 67 comments), DF21 (with 65 comments), DF51A/B (DF51A with 37 comments and DF51B with 27 comments), DF18 (with 28 comments), and DF72R (with 22 comments). The following sections summarize the feedback for these lines.

### **DF7**

A majority of comments on DF7 were in strong opposition to the proposed reduction in frequency from every 30 minutes to every 60 minutes. Community comments emphasized that this reduction in frequency would significantly impact livelihoods in El Cerrito Hills, East Richmond Heights, and the surrounding areas, primarily for students, commuters, and seniors who rely on DF7 to access local middle and high schools, the hospital, El Cerrito BART, downtown Berkeley, UC Berkeley, and the Senior Center. Community comments voiced that reducing its frequency will make it much harder to access essential services and destinations, especially for elderly and disabled riders, who may be forced to find alternative transit options. Additionally, commuters and students commented they would be forced to use single-occupancy cars instead of public transit if this proposal was implemented.

Many comments made by riders also reported overcrowding on the existing DF7 buses, indicating high demand and the need for higher frequency of service instead, at least during peak hours. There were concerns that the reduction in frequency proposed would lead to buses being so crowded that some riders are turned away.



## **DF67**

Community comments primarily expressed concern with the proposed reduction of DF67 frequency from every 30 minutes to every 60 minutes, which commenters suggested would impact accessibility to essential services, appointments, local schools, BART, and downtown Berkeley – especially for senior and young student populations in the Berkeley Hills. Community comments also expressed that reducing frequency to DF67 would also make it harder for elderly and disabled riders, who reported difficult walks up and down the hill and heavy reliance on AC Transit for mobility, with a concern that the reduction in frequency may isolate some riders in the Berkeley Hills and surrounding neighborhoods. There were also many requests to bring back DF67 weekend service to access Tilden Regional Park, the library, and other community services. In general, community comments suggested that proposed changes to DF67 would significantly increase car dependency in the area and make daily commutes more difficult. Similar to the feedback received on DF7, community comments suggested maintaining 30-minute frequency of DF67 during peak hours to ensure essential transit needs are met.

## **DF65**

Comments on DF65 were mostly regarding the desire for weekend service restoration. Community comments reported that without weekend service, it would be very difficult for residents in the area to travel to UC Berkeley, downtown Berkeley, and community events, and that populations like seniors, students, and those without cars are left isolated.

There were also concerns with the proposal to reduce DF65 frequency from every 40 minutes to every 45 minutes. Community comments expressed the belief that this would make service less convenient and reliable, especially for students commuting to Berkeley High School. Suggestions from community comments included maintaining or increasing frequency of DF65 during peak hours or in coordination with school schedules and extending service hours in the evening to accommodate late activities or events.

## **DF21**

Community comments primarily expressed concern with the loss of DF21 service to Oakland Airport. According to existing users, this loss of service would make traveling to the airport more inconvenient and increase travel times. Comments from employees who work at Oakland Airport were concerned with the loss of DF21 service, as they currently use the line to commute to work. There were other residents, including some seniors, people who do not own cars, and low-income residents who cannot afford other, more expensive transit options. There were suggestions to maintain limited service to Oakland Airport or to compensate for the loss of service with other routes.

However, some community comments expressed support of both the re-routing of DF21 to include Chabot Space and Science Center, Skyline Drive, and Joaquin Miller Park, and the increased frequency of DF21.



### **DF51A and DF51B**

Most comments about DF51A/B were supportive and appreciated that there were no proposed changes to the lines. Several community comments expressed gratitude that AC Transit was receptive to community input and reaffirmed that the existing DF51A/B lines provide important access for youth, students, seniors, persons with disabilities, and commuters who rely on the bus. There were also some concerns reported with DF51A/B delays and long wait times, as well as several comments suggesting that a more accessible transfer point between the lines be created.

### **DF18 and DF72R**

While not among the top five lines that received the most comments, there was a high volume of comments on lines DF18 and DF72R. For DF18, community comments reflected general excitement about the increased frequency to every 15 minutes, which will address overcrowding, and were supportive of the route change that extends DF18 to Montclair in Oakland. There were also some community comments that proposed extending DF18 along the State Route 13 (SR 13) corridor to Merritt College, which would ease travel between Oakland and Berkeley and be helpful for college students. For DF72R, the most common comments were concerned with the reduction in frequency from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes, which may affect travel patterns and commutes.

## **XII. Conclusion and Next Steps**

The second period of Phase 4 was the final opportunity for public input on the Draft Final Plan. Input collected in this period was used to fine-tune the Final Realign Network Plan before it is brought to the Board on October 9, 2024, for a final vote and decision. Realign then moves into Phase 5, which includes the preparation and coordination (i.e., scheduling, training, public communications, etc.) towards implementation of the new bus service network plan, which will be implemented as early as March 2025. Additionally, the process to update transit service standards is on-going, with updated service standards expected to be approved in advance of plan implementation. A second Draft of an Unconstrained Plan that would go above and beyond what is included in the proposed final plan and Realign+ service additions will be introduced late 2024 and is aimed for Board consideration in 2025.



## **Appendices**

***Appendix A. Number of Comments Received by Bus Line***

***Appendix B. Letters Received from Agencies, Municipalities, and Groups***

***Appendix C. Comments Received Online, via Email, Voicemail, Social Media, Library Comment Cards, and Community Outreach Events***

***Appendix D. Comments Received at Public Hearings***

***Appendix E. Examples of Outreach and Promotional Materials***