

A background image showing a map of a city street grid with various colored lines (blue, red, purple) representing transit routes. Overlaid on the map are two purple navigation arrows: a right-pointing arrow and a left-pointing arrow, both with a vertical bar in the center.

# Realign

## **AC Transit Realign**

## **Phase 4 Draft Plan Engagement Report**

May – June 2024



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Outreach Process and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	4
Digital / Print Engagement	4
In-person / Virtual Engagement	5
CBO Partnerships	6
Community Pop-Up Events	8
Bus Stop and Onboard Bus Outreach	10
Presentations and Announcements	12
Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) Meeting	13
District-wide Online Workshop	14
Community Input	15
Conclusion and Next Steps	16
Appendices	17



## Executive Summary

AC Transit Realign (Realign) is a comprehensive review of the existing service network to understand current rider needs and travel patterns. The ultimate 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 brings this plan to the public in two phases: the initial period of Phase 4 informed the public of the draft plan and solicited community feedback, while the second period will consist of a formal public comment process through public hearings. The following report summarizes the first period of Phase 4 outreach, the goal of which was to share the Draft Plan with the community, provide information about how the plan was developed, and gather 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. Pop-ups, presentations, and a district-wide online workshop were directed towards the public, while Community-Based Organization (CBO)-led events and a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) meeting focused on CBOs and their networks to ensure that AC Transit heard from the most vulnerable, transit-dependent members of the community.

The initial period of Phase 4 outreach on the Draft Plan was May 5, 2024, to June 5, 2024. During this period, the Realign Outreach team conducted 180 outreach activities, including community events, council presentations, events with CBOs, and outreach engagements at heavily trafficked bus stops/transit centers, with almost 6,000 touchpoints recorded across the AC Transit service area. The second period of Phase 4 outreach on the Draft Plan and Public Hearings will continue in Summer-Fall 2024 and include public hearings to solicit formal public comments on the Draft Plan.



## Outreach Process and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Phase 4 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 Plan. The project webpage was a central location for Phase 4 outreach information and included details on the Draft Plan, line-by-line route change profiles, and an interactive map, including a Trip Planner feature that the public could comment on. AC Transit also leveraged collateral on buses and at bus stops/platforms to increase awareness of Phase 4 opportunities to provide input among ridership. 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 the initial period of Phase 4 outreach efforts 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: 23,116 (3<sup>rd</sup> highest on website, behind RealTime and Homepage)
  - 2. Users: 11,315
- B. AC Transit eNews: newsletters detailing upcoming Phase 4 meetings/events and how to provide input were sent to 20,834 recipients, which included policymakers, CBOs, and the public.
  - 1. Unique Opens: 4,792 (27%) | 4,444 (25%)
  - 2. Total Opens: 7,754 | 7,406
  - 3. Total Clicks: 570 | 1,260
- C. Social Media: images and promotions via AC Transit’s social media channels
  - 1. Social Media Performance (Impressions/Engagements): 45,836
    - a) Engagements: 1,774
    - b) Clicks: 232
- D. Online mapping tool: 461
  - 1. ArcGIS comments: 65
- E. Phone line comments: 6
- F. Email comments: 49
- G. Digital Ads/Banners
  - 1. Total Impressions: 645,893
  - 2. Total Clicks: 614
- H. Print Ads in Local Newspapers
  - 1. Total Impressions: 161,511

## OVCC Member Announcements



### Next stop: Realign Draft Plan

After a year of gathering feedback from riders and the community, AC Transit has formulated the Realign Draft Plan, outlining the vision for an all-new network. The Plan is now available and we encourage you to share your feedback by June 5. The Draft Plan is carefully crafted to optimize current service and provide opportunities for future expansion without exceeding budgetary constraints. Review and comment online, in person, or at a local library.

Please join AC Transit for a community workshop and public Board of Directors meeting:  
 Workshop: Thursday, May 23 at 6pm – webinar format  
 AC Transit Board of Directors Meeting: Wednesday, June 5, 5pm – hybrid meeting

For the draft plan and more information about Realign, go to [actransit.org/realign](https://actransit.org/realign)

## Community Announcements

Oakland Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce Newsletter

# Próxima Parada:

## Borrador del plan de Realign

Revise el borrador en línea, en persona o en bibliotecas.



Infórmate y comenta en línea:  
**[actransit.org/realign](https://actransit.org/realign)**  
 Encuentre información en una biblioteca:  
 (510) 267-5632



# Realign

@rideact    

Spanish Language Digital / Print Advertisement

## II. In-person / Virtual Engagement

- A. Total Events: 180
- B. Touchpoints across all events: 5,853
- C. Bus Stop and Onboard Outreach: 106
  1. Touchpoints: 3,256
  2. Total card surveys distributed: 1,899
  3. Total scanned QR Codes: 762
- D. CBO Events: 9
  1. Touchpoints: 151
- E. Community Event Pop-Ups: 11
  1. Touchpoints: 1,367
- F. Library Pop-Ups: 21
  1. Comment cards received: 9
- G. Open Houses at AC Transit General Office: 1
  1. Touchpoints: 28
- H. LEAG Meeting: 1
  1. Participants: 3
- I. Attendance and participation at district-wide online workshop: 38
  1. Comments received: 61
- J. June 5 Realign Board Workshop

- 1. Speakers: 56
- K. Presentations and Announcements: 29
  - 1. Touchpoints: 1,010

**III. CBO Partnerships**

In the initial period of Phase 4, CBO partners held nine focus groups, pop-in presentations, or events, which provided an opportunity to foster in-depth discussions about the Draft Plan and hear directly about community members’ experiences. Focus groups and events were also an effective way to gain input from seniors and paratransit riders who can be more challenging to reach via other forums, such as online and at pop-up events. During each event, project team staff provided an overview of the Realign project and detailed information about the Draft Plan, including route and line changes specific to the CBO’s target geography. Participants were then able to ask questions and discuss the proposed plan with the project team. The following is a list of the nine events:

Date	CBO Event	Ward
5/9/24	Cherryland Community Association	4
5/13/24	Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL)	All
5/15/24	Trybe	3
5/19/24	Black Cultural Zone	3
5/19/24	Glad Tidings Community Church	4, 5
5/20/24	United Seniors of Oakland Alameda County (USOAC)	3
5/28/24	Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce	2
5/29/24	La Familia	All
6/3/24	The Latina Center	1



*CRIL CBO Event on May 13, 2024*

Over the nine CBO events, 151 touchpoints were made with community members, many of them expressing their gratitude for AC Transit’s effort to ensure they were informed about the project and their voices were heard.

In these conversations, most comments were related to concerns regarding reliability, with attendees citing buses arriving significantly early or late, buses unexpectedly not stopping at scheduled stops, and discrepancies between real-time app information and scheduled service. They emphasized the importance of reliability, especially when they are making bus connections or going to healthcare appointments.

Frequency was also a common topic, with attendees expressing positive views about the Draft Plan’s increases in route frequency but concerned about how AC Transit will ensure buses maintain this more frequent schedule. To make this more feasible, attendees suggested having more frequency during rush hour but fewer buses running during off-hours.



*USOAC CBO Event on May 20, 2024*

Other concerns raised by attendees included bus operators not waiting for passengers attempting to board, overcrowding on the buses, and traffic congestion. Attendees also stressed the importance of AC Transit collaborating with other transportation agencies for a better transit experience and suggested expanding transit service to parks and recreational areas, especially on the weekends.

#### **IV. Community Pop-Up Events**

Eleven community pop-ups were held at local community events across the service area, making 1,367 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 Plan, proposed changes to their bus lines, and how to provide input.





*Castro Valley Farmers Market Pop-Up on May 18, 2024*

The project team collected input via comment cards and provided take-ones/flyers with a QR code to the online input tool/Realign webpage. A summary of input heard at these events is incorporated into the following Community Input section. The table below provides an overview of Phase 4 community pop-up events and the number of touchpoints recorded at each.

Date	Location	Ward	Touchpoints
5/5/24	Cinco de Mayo event, Richmond	1	250
5/11/24	Ohlone College Flea Market, Fremont	5	27
5/16/24	Bike East Bay: Bike to Wherever Day – Old Oakland	2	114
5/16/24	Bike East Bay: Bike to Wherever Day – UC Berkeley Sproul Plaza	1, 2	27
5/16/24	Bike East Bay: Bike to Wherever Day – El Cerrito Plaza BART	1	114
5/16/24	Bike East Bay: Bike to Wherever Day – Fremont (Warm Springs)	5	50
5/16/24	Bike East Bay: Bike to Wherever Day – Hayward	4, 5	150

5/18/24	Castro Valley Farmers Market	4	25
5/22/24	Richmond 40 <sup>th</sup> Annual Senior Information & Health Faire	1	150
6/1/24	San Leandro Cherry Festival	3, 4	505
6/4/24	South Berkeley Farmers Market	1	90



*Richmond Senior Faire Pop-Up on May 22, 2024*

#### **V. Bus Stop and Onboard Bus Outreach**

There were 106 outreach engagements conducted at bus stops and onboard buses across the AC Transit system, with Realign ambassadors sharing card surveys, QR codes to the project website, and taking input on the Draft Plan. There were 1,899 card surveys distributed and 762 people who scanned the QR codes. Some of these engagements included additional interpretation services, as described in the following table:

Language	Number of Outreach Engagements	Touchpoints
English	106	2,321
Spanish	44/106	579
Cantonese	16/106	237

Tagalog	5/106	23
Mandarin	2/106	63
Portuguese	1/106	0
Total	106*	3,256**

\*All engagements were conducted in English with additional language support as needed, based on location.

\*\* Denotes number of community members engaged in this language.

While the focus of outreach was on promoting the Realign Draft Plan, riders also brought up the following topics in conversation with the project team:

- More buses: Riders suggested adding more buses to every line because they experience a lack of timeliness and consistency to get to work, an event, etc.
- Customer service: Riders would like bus drivers to go through customer service training. Many echoed the sentiment of completely being ignored by bus drivers when waiving them down or that they are rude and distant when helping a customer if they need it.
- Safety: Riders, especially the elderly, feel unsafe at many bus stops because of a lack of proper lighting during nighttime and because of the behavior of the unhoused or mentally unwell individuals within the area. More needs to be done to ensure the safety of the public.
- Cleanliness: Riders would like there to be consistent clean-ups at bus stops and buses themselves. Broken glass, human remains, and funny smells can be found on many different bus lines, making the experience uncomfortable.



*Alameda West End Bus Stop Outreach*

**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 Plan to city councils, municipal advisory councils, and other local committees, reaching 1,010 touchpoints. These announcements were given in standing meetings and allowed attendees, including elected officials and other stakeholders. In limited cases, input was received from attendees and is included in the following Community Input section; a complete list of local jurisdiction announcements given during Phase 4 is included in the table below:

Date	Location	Ward
5/6/24	Piedmont City Council	3
5/6/24	Albany City Council	1
5/6/24	San Leandro City Council	3, 4
5/7/24	Oakland City Council	2, 3
5/7/24	North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council (MAC)	1
5/7/24	El Cerrito City Council	1
5/7/24	Alameda City Council	3
5/7/24	Ashland Cherryland Food & Basic Needs	4
5/8/24	El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council (MAC)	1
5/8/24	AC Transit BART Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC)	All
5/9/24	Newark City Council	5
5/14/24	Berkeley City Council	1, 2
5/14/24	Eden Area Municipal Advisory Council (MAC)	4
5/20/24	Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council (MAC)	4
5/20/24	San Pablo City Council	1
5/21/24	Oakland City Council	2, 3
5/21/24	Fremont City Council	5
5/21/24	Emeryville City Council	2

5/22/24	City of Alameda Transportation Commission	3
5/23/24	Alameda County Transportation Commission	All
5/23/24	City of Albany Transportation Commission	1
5/24/24	West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC)	1
5/28/24	Richmond City Council	1
5/28/24	City of Union City Council	4
5/30/24	AC Transit Berkeley Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC)	1, 2
5/31/24	AC Transit Hayward Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC)	4, 5
6/5/24	AC Transit Oakland Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC)	2, 3
6/8/24	Berkeley Neighborhood Council	1, 2
6/11/24	Transbay Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	All

## VII. LEAG Meeting

The Phase 4 LEAG meeting was held on Saturday, May 18 to present the Draft Plan and hear feedback on the proposed service changes. Representatives from Wards 2, 3, and 5 attended.

After an explanation of how the Draft Plan was developed from the service alternatives and a detailed presentation of the specific changes resulting from the plan, LEAG members discussed questions and comments with the project team. One existing system issue was raised with route 51A's current reliability, with LEAG members reporting significant delays beyond the scheduled times.

The LEAG members generally expressed support for the proposed changes to sustain service levels and improve route reliability. Some concerns included the proposed elimination and changes to routes 215 and 212, particularly regarding service to the Vedic Dharma Samaj Fremont Hindu Temple and the Warm Springs BART Station, and the impact of the Draft Plan on users of low ridership routes. For these users, they emphasized the need to provide alternative transit options.

The project team also provided information about Phase 4 outreach. One LEAG member suggested that outreach for this phase should be similar to the scope of outreach conducted for Phase 1 with more engagement of CBO partners; however, this concern was addressed and resolved after the outreach plan for Phase 4 was shared and discussed.

### **VIII. District-wide Online Workshop**

The district-wide online workshop was held on May 23, 2024, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom, and presented information about how the Draft Plan was developed, proposed changes by service planning areas (4), and public engagement activities.

There were 38 participants and 61 questions and comments provided by the community via the Q&A function, 43 of which were addressed during the workshop. The workshop was delivered in English with closed captions in 35+ languages and with live Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese interpretation available. It was also recorded and uploaded to the Realign project page for community members to view and reference.

The workshop concluded with a robust Q&A session with panelists Media Affairs Manager Robert Lyles, General Manager Michael Hursh, Service Development and Planning Manager/Realign Acting Project Manager Michael Eshleman, External Affairs Representative/Realign Deputy Project Manager Diann Castleberry, Chief Financial Officer Chris Andrichak, Legislative Affairs & Community Relations Director Claudia Burgos, and Kittelson consultant/Project Manager Laurence Lewis. During this Q&A session, participants inquired about a wide range of topics, including specific line changes, how runtimes are adjusted for congestion, and accessibility considerations. Questions and comments from the workshop are incorporated into the following Community Input section.

## Community Input

Community input collected during the initial period of Phase 4 was received via the online feedback form, on social media, via formal letters, and at 180 in-person/virtual engagement events. This data, which consists of mostly line-specific feedback, will be used by the project team to fine tune and adjust the Draft Plan before it is presented to the Board for approval. The following sections summarize the positive and negative feedback received.

The online feedback form received over 500 responses, with the most commented on lines being DB7 (17%), DB67 (13%), and DB21 (12%). Of the comments, 70% included feedback on the proposed schedule changes while 56% included feedback on the proposed route changes.

### Positive Sentiment

Community members were generally grateful for the Realign project and the efforts being made to listen to rider feedback about their experiences; there was also recognition of the resource constraints, difficult decisions, and trade-offs that face the project team. Positive feedback included support for Draft Plan changes that provide better transit connections and more direct routes, and the plan maintaining or increasing service to specific neighborhoods.

There was appreciation for the increased frequency of some lines (i.e., DB28), the introduction of 15-minute weekday frequency, and the restoration of other lines and/or their frequencies (particularly regarding DB18 and DB29). Community members also expressed support for the route changes and extended service under the Draft Plan for several lines, including DB27, DB6, and DB52.

### Negative Sentiment

The most common concern was regarding the reduction of frequency on certain lines (primarily DB7, DB72R, DB65, DB67, and DB19), with many comments suggesting that reducing frequency will reduce ridership, lower reliability, and greatly affect transit for students, commuters, and seniors. If increased frequency all day is not feasible given resource constraints, community members emphasized the need for increased frequency at least during peak hours like mornings and evenings. The lack of weekend service in the Draft Plan was also a point of concern.

Beyond frequency, there was also disappointment with the elimination and/or consolidation of certain routes, especially regarding 21 service to Oakland airport and 51A. While there were some people in support of the consolidation of 51, many were upset about the changes, and there was significant concern regarding the elimination of 21 service to Oakland airport without any replacement or alternative option. In general, for reductions in service or frequency due to the Draft Plan, community members argued that there should be a proposal for alternative transit options for affected riders.

Changes in frequency and routes also affected the level of service in certain areas, especially central Alameda, the Berkeley Hills, and the El Cerrito Hills; community members argued that reducing frequent, reliable service near where they live would significantly impact ridership and quality of life.



There were also several calls to see Transbay lines, particularly Transbay H, reinstated for those dependent on Transbay services to commute to and from work.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Initial Phase 4 community input was robust and collected from many different audiences across AC Transit's service area. The Draft Plan will be presented for formal public comment at four public hearings held in Fall 2024, after which line-specific feedback and general sentiment on the Draft Plan will be incorporated by the project team into the final service network plan. The project will then present this plan to the Board for a final vote and approval.

Realign then moves into Phase 5, which includes the lead-up (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. The process to update transit service standards is expected to go to the Board for adoption by the close of 2024, while the Unconstrained Vision Plan will follow suit in 2025.





## **Appendices**

**Appendix A.** Outreach Report by Activity (CBO, LEAG, Community Events, Presentations and Announcements)

**Appendix B.** Online Draft Plan Survey Tool Responses

**Appendix C.** Bus Stop and Onboard Bus Outreach Report

**Appendix D.** District-Wide Community Workshop Questions and Comments

**Appendix E.** Public Comments from Phone, Email, and Libraries

**Appendix F.** Social Media Comments

**Appendix G.** Letters from Municipalities and Stakeholder Groups

**Appendix H.** Board Comments

**Appendix I.** June 5, 2024 Board Meeting/Workshop