



ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT

Master Minute Order

Report ID: 23-250f **Status:** Direction Given

Type: Regular - Planning

Meeting Body: Board of Directors - Regular Meeting 01/24/2024 **Final Action:** 01/24/2024

Sponsors:

Attachments: STAFF REPORT, Att.1. Service Proposals, Att.2. Draft Public Hearing Notice, Att.3. Phase 3 Engagement Report, Att.4. New Street Segments, Att.5. Proposed Discontinued Segments, Att.6. Realign Powerpoint

Related Files:

Agenda Title:

Consider setting hybrid Public Hearings before the Board of Directors at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at AC Transit’s General Offices; and direct staff to hold two remote Public Hearings on March 11, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. and March 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. regarding the Realign Draft Final Service Plan Proposal.

Staff Contact:

Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications

Legislative Action & Summary

Acting Body: Board of Directors - Regular Meeting	Date: 01/24/2024	Action: Direction given	Result: Pass
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Action Text:

REVISED MOTION: SYED/BECKLES to direct staff to extend the Realign process by six months; to refine the draft plan to eliminate disparate impacts on equity priority communities; to cease the study of using non-union operators in the District’s service area; to approach ATU Local 192 about another general signup and to advise and consult with the Board in the next three months on this issue. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 4 Director BECKLES, Director WALSH, Director SYED, Director PEEPLES

Nayes: 3 President YOUNG, Vice President SHAW, Director McCALLEY

Notes:

[Written comment received prior to the meeting is incorporated into the file by reference.]

Principal Transportation Planner David Berman and External Affairs Representative Diann Castleberry presented the staff report.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Eric Engelbart commented on the proposed changes to Line 21, noting that the proposed change eliminates service to the airport without proposing a viable alternative while running against the Board's own adopted environmental goals. Engelbart added that a service cut would leave eastern Alameda residents without a viable option for public transportation.

George Spies recommended that the Board delay the Realign process so it can bring forth the most efficient service delivery to the public.

Dory Goldberg, Co-Chair of People's Transit Alliance, commented on the importance of working conditions for transit workers and supported actions which implement reliability and runtime improvements on existing routes. Goldberg expressed opposition to the hiring of non-ATU labor for the micro transit pilot program proposal in the Warm Springs area.

Navi Rizvi noted that while the proposed service cuts would improve reliability, it would add service to some corridors at the expense of cuts to service on other major corridors, including some 'lifeline' routes. Rizvi commented that these proposed route changes would not improve service reliability but instead create longer run times and missed driver breaks. Rizvi suggested that management should look to reallocate resources from Transbay service with the lowest ridership to prevent cuts to local service.

Andy Katz commented that the draft service plan for Realign is premature and would send the District on a downward spiral. Katz explained that the depth of the service cuts is not budget-based and would create negative service quality because of proposed service hour cuts. Katz also commented about proposed service cuts for Lines 65 and 67 in Berkeley and why these lines should be retained.

Laurel Paget-Seekins noted the negative impact and likely reduced and unreliable bus service in the current Realign proposal. Paget-Seekins commented on alternative ways to achieve positive changes, including working with partner cities.

Jack Watkins, Bus Operator, expressed the negative impact and additional job stresses felt by bus operators connected to consideration of the proposed micro transit proposal. Watkins asked for Board support of bus operator mental health.

Richard Marcantonio appreciated the Board's decision to make improvements to benefit bus operators and believed that staff should take steps to quickly implement these improvements. Marcantonio commented that AC Transit needs to develop its visionary network to include both healthy working conditions and frequent, reliable service. Marcantonio added that the micro transit proposal should be staffed by AC Transit ATU operators.

David Lyons, retired bus operator, commented on the needs and areas of support for bus operators in the Realign process.

Tyler expressed disappointment of the reported decrease of frequency on urban bus lines, like Line 57. Tyler commented that providing frequent local service is key to reducing car dependence and the creation of a cycle where decreased congestion makes it easier and cheaper to operate buses. Tyler added that re-designing Transbay service should be considered to mitigate cuts to local bus service.

Uchenne Okoye commented on conflicting messaging about service reduction in the Realign program, but lauded other Realign program efforts that improve community connectivity, especially for student riders.

Warren Cushman asked that the District clarify its messaging to riders whether the workforce crisis or the fiscal cliff dangers are the issues driving the Realign process. Cushman commented on the hopeful

vision that a system where the operators and riders work together to solve its problem.

Avima Zuliani commented against proposed service reduction on Line 74 line because residents would have to travel 15 minutes on streets with no sidewalks to reach other public transit or Kaiser hospital.

Anthony criticized the Board for its inactivity to address the service cuts. Anthony noted that the Board should be taking action to reverse service cuts, perhaps by re-addressing its contracts with Alameda County Sheriff's Office and the Transbay Terminal.

Juan C commented on views about the Realign proposals and noted support for the use of unionized workers for the proposed micro transit proposal.

Brian Culbertson commented that a reduction of services since 2019 is the beginning of a transit death spiral which must be quickly reversed. Culbertson noted that service recovery should aim for 2026 when more funding is available. Culbertson also commented that the micro transit proposal would be more expensive with fewer riders than regular bus service and suggested that Transbay service be de-focused in favor of local bus service until 2026.

Christian Rodrigo, People's Transit Alliance, commented on the tasks that would be needed to make Realign successful, like improving bus frequency. Rodrigo noted that any micro transit service program should be staffed by ATU workers.

Chonita Chew requested clarity for the Line 73 service.

Eve Devilers expressed appreciation for Realign for enhancing transit service reliability. Devilers urged the implementation of reliability and runtime improvements on existing routes, which would improve bus operator working conditions, and that the district continue to push for increased public transit funding. Devilers added support for the micro transit proposal if staffed by ATU workers.

Nathaniel Arnold expressed disappointment for the way the Realign program is changing lines 57 and 18, which serve students and the neediest communities. Arnold commented on the need to improve policies which improve safety and retention.

Sam Greenberg noted disappointment that the expected transit transformation for the East Bay has not happened and blamed unfair austerity measures. Greenberg agreed with other public speakers that any micro transit proposal should be staffed by ATU labor and noted that expenditures on Alameda County Sheriffs contract and Transbay routes at the cost of cutting local service for transit-dependent riders is unjustified.

Valery Lancey noted concerns that transbay service is protected over the needs of local service, calling Transbay service redundant to BART. Lancey commented that the Realign process has been less about transit transformation and more about loss of service.

Robert Mckay commented that prioritization for transit frequency drives productivity and increased ridership, and steps should be taken in the short term to cut duplicative services or low ridership lines while keeping equity issues in mind. McKay added that long-term considerations about managing employee retention needs to be worked out.

Cecile opposes cuts to union jobs and key transit routes needed by daily commuters. Cecile expressed support for more frequent transit service and asked the Board to retain critical routes.

Sultana Adams, Co-Chair, Peoples Transit Alliance, hoped that the comments and suggestions of the drivers are heard. Adams commented on concerns about cuts to some routes which would leave no service to riders with any other form of public transit alternatives and urged the Board to avoid any cuts to these essential routes. Adams supported the use of ATU drivers over outsourcing for any possible micro transit service.

Alfred Twu commented that service reliability and good working conditions are the most important

issues to keep in mind during this process and added that adding and retaining a strong number of bus operators is key to restoring service and maintaining bus frequency. Twu also noted that the elimination of service that leaves riders without any alternative transit options will not improve ridership for the system. Two noted that micro transit service has a low track record for ridership and high expense but, if needed, must be staffed by union labor.

MOTION: SYED/BECKLES to extend the Realign process to a March 2025 implementation (six month extension) and direct staff to report back in three months with a recommendations that can be made in August 2024 sign-up related to ensuring that critical bus operator issue are being addressed.

After further discussion of the motion, Director Syed revised the motion on the floor, which was seconded by Director Beckles as follows:
