

March 11, 2024

Dear AC Transit Board of Directors,

We want to thank the Board for putting Realign on pause at your January 24th meeting. We don't accept the premise that Realign should require service cuts to ensure reliability for workers and riders.

As organizations that work with diverse transit riders and workers, we want to partner with AC Transit to find solutions that improve service and working conditions. AC Transit needs to take the lead by advocating for its riders and workers with cities, counties, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and at the state and federal level.

AC Transit needs to focus its budget on improving service and to advocate for additional funding. We will support AC Transit efforts for more funding from local jurisdictions and at MTC, including regional funding for the Transbay Terminal and significant operating funds in the 2026 regional measure.

We know a limiting factor for increasing service is hiring and retaining bus operators. We support AC Transit raising wages to be competitive with other transit agencies in the region and working with ATU Local 192 to identify additional ways to improve retention. AC Transit should plan for additional operators to be on board when Realign goes into effect, and make necessary improvements to hiring and retention to meet this goal.

A win-win solution is on-street priority for buses. Improvements such as signal priority, dedicated lanes, level boarding, and queue jumps speed up buses and reverse the slow run times and inadequate layovers that have made bus service more resource-intensive. As Realign planning continues, AC Transit should present cities with "Hot Spot" areas where quick-build street improvements can fix key slow zones. We will work with AC Transit and local jurisdictions to support transit accessible projects and funding.

In terms of Realign, we would like to see:

- A more incremental approach that fixes reliability and adds service as additional operators and funding become available.
- Improvements to service for Equity Priority Communities.
- Continued rider and worker engagement to understand the impact of proposed changes, especially on high-ridership lines like the San Pablo corridor. There needs to be specific outreach to seniors and people with disabilities for any bus stop eliminations.
- Completion of the service standards and visionary network in time to advocate for funds in the 2026 regional measure.

The East Bay needs much more transit accessible service options to meet the needs of our communities and climate goals. We appreciate the leadership of the Board and want to work with AC Transit to increase funding and transit oriented solutions so our communities get the frequent and reliable service they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Laurel Paget-Seekins, Public Advocates

Sultana Adams and Dori Goldberg, co-chairs, People's Transit Alliance

Carter Lavin, Transbay Coalition

Chonita Chew, United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County, Travel Trainer & Community Organizer

Michai Freeman, The Center for Independent Living

Darrell Owens, East Bay Transit Riders Union

Bryan Culbertson, Traffic Violence Rapid Response

Kuan Butts, Transport Oakland

Warren Cushman, Community Resources for Independent Living