

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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Alameda Contra-Costa Transit District (AC Transit)
Submitted electronically.

March 12, 2024

Subject: AC Transit Realign Update (Under Board Report 23-250g)

Dear AC Transit Board Members:

UC Berkeley has partnered with AC Transit for decades in providing fast and reliable services to the staff, faculty, and students of the campus. With approximately six percent of employees and twenty percent of the students using AC Transit services, the campus appreciates the efforts that the District has made every year. Since 1999, roughly fifty percent of the students through the Student EasyPass program have used AC Transit to get to, from, and beyond the campus.

Parking & Transportation has reviewed the latest updates that Staff will present to the Board. We encourage the District to engage with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, EasyPass partners (including UC Berkeley), and elected officials at local, state, and federal levels to find additional funding but to improve service within the community.

In terms of Realign, the campus, me, as well as the Class Pass Oversight Committee (the student led group that oversees the funds that the students are supporting), are still in (majority) support to streamline service in and around the Berkeley Campus. The need to make transit stronger and connect additional corridors is critical to ensure effective travel throughout the East Bay and beyond. Service is important to also address the existential threats to climate change and the increase of driving as a post-pandemic model.

Concurrently, we are very concerned about the discussions surrounding the cancellation of AC Transit Transbay Service. Many of the campus community rely on the F (Berkeley – Emeryville) route, for both local and Transbay trips. For our EasyPass users, it is a critical and inexpensive service between San Francisco and the East Bay (where trips would have been made with BART). They would not approve of any changes to the existing Transbay service as well. Ridership before and after the Shelter-in-place showed a reasonable (albeit comparatively small) usage for Transbay Routes.

Removal of Transbay Service also runs aground to the existing contract that we have with the District. The students were promised, because of the passage renewing the Class Pass Program, that they would have unimpeded service between San Francisco and Berkeley (and surrounding areas). Should Realign impact operations and service delivery with Transbay service, Staff must engage with us and the other EasyPass clients on the restructuring of existing contracts, up to and including District support and funding for BayPass Programs, as a suitable and good-faith seamless replacement between BART, AC Transit, Muni, and other regional agencies.

Transit service must continue connecting communities locally and regionally and should never be a last resort to many of the riders, including the 55,000 UC affiliates that frequent our campus every day. Many of the riders that come on to the campus see a benefit and a need of AC Transit service connecting the campus to jobs, home, and many other locations. A strong first and last mile option, the District provides services to where the alternative would've been driving alone.

December 13, 2023

Page 2

We encourage Staff and the Board to continue engaging with the campus, including the CPOC, on the continuation of the ReAlign project, to better improve transit and mobility access to UC Berkeley and the East Bay as a whole.

We would like to thank AC Transit for the opportunity to provide feedback and please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DS', is positioned above the printed name.

David Sorrell, TDM-CP

Transportation Demand Management Administrator and Acting Principal Mobility Planner
UC Berkeley Parking & Transportation Department

Cc:

Luke Matsui and Victoria Saad-Matière, Student Chairs, Class Pass Advisory Committee

Elijah Burckin and Linsy Damashek, Student Chairs, Mobility and Equity Committee

Ren Fitzgerald, Class Pass Realign Liaison with the Associated Students of UC Berkeley (ASUC)

Seamus Wilmot, Assistant Vice Chancellor & Executive Director, Business Operations, UC Berkeley

Jen Loy & Ruben Luzardo, UC Berkeley Government Affairs