

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ANITA WINKLER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR—TRANSIT
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS
SUBJECT: REIMAGINING CITYBUS—ROUTE 4A/4B AND ROUTE 11 FINAL
ALIGNMENTS

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council, by resolution, adopt the original proposal for the Route 4A/4B alignment, the original proposal for the western terminus of Route 11, and an extension of the eastern terminus of Route 11 to Stagecoach Road and Fountaingrove Parkway.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This item relates to three elements of the Reimagining CityBus Final Plan that were not included in the action to adopt the plan taken by the City Council at its June 7, 2016 meeting:

- 1) the western terminus of Route 11,
- 2) the eastern terminus of Route 11, and
- 3) the alignment of Route 4A/4B service in the Memorial Hospital area.

Transit Division staff conducted additional analysis and outreach and will present options and staff recommendations for these remaining elements of the Reimagining CityBus Final Plan.

This item relates to Council Goal 3.1: “Improve transportation network to reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote multi-modal transportation.” The Reimagining CityBus project includes a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Santa Rosa CityBus transit system and development of a plan to better match the system to rider needs and to improve transit system performance.

BACKGROUND

The Reimagining CityBus Final Plan contains recommendations for a new “Phase I” bus route network to be implemented in 2016, and a “Phase II” longer-range vision for development of the CityBus system. At the May 24, 2016 public hearing on the

Reimagining CityBus Draft Plan, City Council members requested that the Transportation and Public Works Department conduct additional outreach and bring additional information related to three elements of the plan: 1) the eastern terminus of Route 11, 2) and western terminus of Route 11, and 3) the alignment of Route 4A/4B service in the Memorial Hospital area. The Reimagining CityBus Final Plan was adopted by the City Council on June 7, 2016, with the exception of these three elements, pending completion of additional outreach and evaluation of alternatives.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On April 7, 2015, the City Council received a report on the Reimagining CityBus project and accepted the Public Involvement Plan for the project.

On April 16, 2015, City Council members participated in a planning workshop for Reimagining CityBus with stakeholders from various Santa Rosa agencies and organizations.

On August 8, 2015, the City Council received a report on feedback from public outreach conducted during the spring and summer of 2015, and adopted Service Design Guidelines to guide service planning for the Reimagining CityBus project.

On February 2, 2016, a study session was held with the City Council to review the Preliminary Recommendation for short-term CityBus route and schedule changes.

On May 24, 2016, a public hearing on the Reimagining CityBus Draft Plan was held.

On June 7, 2016, the City Council adopted the Reimagining CityBus Final Plan, with the exception of the elements of the service plan to be considered at the August 16, 2016 City Council meeting.

ANALYSIS

During June and July 2016, the Transit Division evaluated alternatives and conducted additional outreach to prepare the following recommendations.

1) Western Terminus of Route 11

Original proposal: The original proposal for the western terminus of Route 11 involved the bus traveling via Fulton Road, Appletree Drive, and Peterson Lane before heading inbound on Guerneville Road. This route would be operated with a small (29') bus, with six trips/day operated roughly every 75 minutes between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm, on weekdays only.

Alternatives: In response to neighborhood concerns and City Council requests, the Transit Division evaluated alternatives to the alignment originally proposed for operational feasibility and ability to meet rider needs for travel to and from the Fulton

Marketplace and vicinity. The Transit Division has evaluated six alternatives, three of which involved using the Fulton Marketplace property to turn the bus around:

- A) Original proposal (Appletree Drive and Peterson Lane): This alternative can be operated safely given street width, sight distance, and stop controls, and with a small bus and six trips/weekday during business hours, the Transit Division's assessment is that the impact on the neighborhood would be minimal.
- B) Convert two-way service to one-way loop: In this alternative, the bus would travel east on Guerneville to Fulton Road, then south on Fulton Road, before returning east on West College Avenue to the Westside Transfer Center. While this alternative is operationally feasible and can be accomplished within the route's current running time, it does not achieve the goal of providing two-way bus service on Guerneville Road to provide timely outbound and inbound trips for riders. Riders from the Marlow & Guerneville area would have to transfer buses at the Westside Transfer Center on the way home, with the potential for considerable wait times given the lower level of frequency on Route 11 and Route 15.
- C) Lane in front of Raley's and adjacent stores into the Fulton Marketplace parking lot: This alternative is operationally feasible in terms of vehicle turning movements; however, the Transit Division's assessment is that this option presents too great an opportunity for pedestrian and vehicular conflicts given that this is a busy shopping center with large numbers of vehicle and pedestrians traversing the area throughout the day.
- D) Lane serving the loading area in back of Raley's and adjacent stores: The Transit Division found the option using the lane serving the loading area in back of the stores to be operationally feasible, but in discussions with the property manager as well as Raley's corporate representatives, it became clear that there would not be a guaranteed path of travel through the loading area at all times. Raley's declined to approve this approach based on potential conflicts with trucks making deliveries.
- E) Small employee parking lot on Fulton Marketplace property, off of the Appletree Drive western extension: Use of the small employee parking lot received initial approval from the Fulton Marketplace property manager and Raley's corporate representatives, but there are significant operational constraints given the lay-out of the parking lot. While it is technically possible to turn a bus around in this parking lot, successfully completing this turning movement is dependent on factors outside of the Transit Division's control, such as the size of vehicles using the lot and location of parked cars.
- F) Youth Community Park: The Transit Division evaluated the possibility of turning the bus around via the parking lot at Youth Community Park. This is feasible with an empty parking lot, but not feasible when many cars are using the lot.

- G) U-turn at Fulton Road and Appletree Drive: The Transit Division evaluated the possibility of turning the bus around using the protected left turn at the traffic signal at Fulton Road and Appletree Drive to complete a U-turn. While this turning movement is possible, it is an unorthodox approach for a transit vehicle and is not considered an optimum solution by transit operations staff.

Outreach activities: A mailing was sent to all neighbors within 500' of Appletree Drive and the portion of Peterson Lane the bus would traverse with notice of a neighborhood meeting, which was held on July 20 at 6:00pm. Four residents attended the neighborhood meeting, which was staffed both by City Transit and Traffic Engineering staff.

Due to the low attendance, a second neighborhood meeting was scheduled for August 4, with notice provided via a second mailing, an article in the neighborhood newsletter, and posted on NextDoor.com. Ten residents attended this meetings and discussed concerns and options, and most joined TPW staff on a bus ride through the Appletree neighborhood to demonstrate the proposed route.

Statistics on accidents involving CityBus vehicles and bicyclists and pedestrians: Over the past ten years and over 10.5 million miles of service operated, the Transit Division has recorded three accidents involving pedestrians or bicyclists and CityBus vehicles. Two of the three were found to be “not preventable” by the CityBus operator (they involved an intoxicated pedestrian and a pedestrian crossing against the light). The third involved a side-to-side collision with a bicyclist and a bus. None of these incidents occurred on residential neighborhood streets.

Recommendation: Based on evaluation of the alternatives, the Transit Division recommends the original proposal to turn Route 11 around via Fulton Road, Appletree Drive, and Peterson Lane, due to the Division’s assessment that the alternatives evaluated either have significant operational barriers, have significantly higher opportunities for pedestrian or vehicular conflicts than the original proposal, or result in a transit service that does not meet the needs of the riders Route 11 is intended to serve.

2) Eastern Terminus of Route 11:

Original proposal: The original proposal for the eastern terminus of Route 11 involved turning the bus around via Sleepy Hollow Drive, Bonita Vista Lane, and Chanate Road. This proposal was met with concern from neighborhood residents due to a “pinch point” in Bonita Vista Lane that is particularly severe during school pick-up and drop-off times and other times when large numbers of cars are parked along Bonita Vista for activities at the Hidden Valley School and Park.

Alternatives:

In response to neighborhood concerns, two alternatives were presented at the public hearing on May 24, 2016: 1) turning the bus around via Parker Hill Road, Leete

Avenue, Aaron Drive, and Sleepy Hollow Drive, and 2) turning the bus around via Chanate Road, Hidden Valley Drive, Meadow Glen Drive, and Hidden Valley Drive. The Transit Division's preference was the first option, given the additional coverage that would be provided to riders accessing stops on Parker Hill Road.

Following the public hearing, Transit Division staff investigated other options for a viable bus turnaround that would also respond to rider requests to further extend Route 11 to serve more of the Fountaingrove neighborhood, while maintaining a 75-80 minute frequency on this route. The Transit Division identified the opportunity to extend the bus to Stagecoach Road and Fountaingrove Parkway and received permission from the Fountaingrove Village property owner to turn the bus around in the Sweet T's parking lot. While a verbal agreement has been reached, staff still needs to prepare a revocable license agreement formalizing the operation which will be brought to the Council for approval.

Outreach activities: Information about the change in the Transit Division's recommendation was provided to residents of the Hidden Valley neighborhood via NextDoor.com. Residents living adjacent to Fountaingrove Village were notified of the proposal by mail. The Fountaingrove Village property owner notified tenants of Fountaingrove Village.

Recommendation: Extend Route 11 to the intersection of Stagecoach Road and Fountaingrove Parkway, turning the bus around at Fountaingrove Village. The Transit Division has received verbal approval from the owner of Fountaingrove Village to use the parking lot in front of the commercial establishments to turn the bus around. With this alignment, Route 11 would serve the existing bus stop at Stagecoach Road and Fountaingrove Parkway, which is approximately ¼ mile from the entrances to both Keysight Industries and Varena.

3) Route 4A/4B Alignment in Memorial Hospital Area:

Original proposal: Consolidate bus routes in the Memorial Hospital Area on Sonoma Avenue, rather than having two different CityBus routes and a Sonoma County Transit route serving Montgomery Drive and Sonoma Avenue, given their close proximity (running parallel to each other with one block separating them).

Alternatives: During the Reimagining CityBus process, riders, other members of the public, and City Council members expressed concern about the loss of CityBus service on Montgomery Drive between Third Street and Montgomery Village. The Transit Division evaluated the following alternatives:

- A) Original proposal (Route 4A/4B service on Sonoma Avenue): This proposal reflects the higher ridership at Sonoma Avenue bus stops in the Memorial Hospital area (likely related in part to more frequent service on Sonoma), the operational benefits of Sonoma Avenue for transit service (width, straighter/faster alignment in and out of Montgomery Village avoiding traffic on Farmers Lane), and the availability of Sonoma County Transit service on Montgomery Drive

(albeit with less frequency than current CityBus service—every two hours rather than hourly).

- B) Consolidate service on Montgomery Drive rather than Sonoma Avenue: While consolidating service on Montgomery Drive would add time to Route 4A/4B due to turns onto/off of Farmers Lane and into/out of Montgomery Village, it is operationally feasible. However, ridership on Montgomery between Brookwood and Montgomery Village is roughly half that of ridership on the same segment of Sonoma Avenue, which also has a large number of medical offices and related destinations.
- C) Split route into two hourly routes between E Street and Montgomery Village: At the public hearing for Reimagining CityBus, the concept of splitting Routes 4A and 4B so that one travels on Sonoma Ave. every hour, and the other travels on Montgomery Drive every hour was discussed. This approach results in uneven cycle times for these routes, since the route serving Montgomery Drive will take longer than the route serving Sonoma Avenue. This in turn inhibits the Transit Division's ability to interline them efficiently, maintain a "clockface" schedule, and maintain the combined 30-minute frequency in this corridor and in Rincon Valley without switching inbound and outbound alignments (which would be likely to result in confusion for riders). This approach would also reduce the frequency on the stronger of the two streets in terms of transit ridership.
- D) Route 4A/4B travel outbound via Sonoma Avenue and return inbound primarily via Sonoma Avenue: Given the downsides of Alternative C, the Transit Division evaluated a variation in which all trips on Route 4A/4B travel outbound via Sonoma Avenue and return inbound primarily via Sonoma Avenue, but with a deviation to serve Montgomery Drive between Doyle Park Drive and Third Street. In this scenario, patrons wishing to travel east from the one-way section of Montgomery Drive would walk to Sonoma Avenue or ride the bus to the Transit Mall and ride the next Route 4A/4B trip outbound. Patrons wishing to travel to the Transit Mall from the one-way portion of Sonoma Avenue would walk to Montgomery Drive or transfer to an inbound Route 4A/4B trip at Montgomery Village.

While this option would provide coverage on both Sonoma Avenue and Montgomery Drive in the Memorial Hospital Area, the segments of one-way service would likely cause some rider confusion and would convert two-way service to one-way service on a portion of Sonoma Avenue. In addition, for this alternative to be operationally feasible, approximately 15 on-street parking spaces would need to be eliminated from the east side of Doyle Park Drive. The City's Parking Division advised Transit that given the high demand for parking on Doyle Park Drive and the potential to exacerbate the impacts of medical office parking on residents of surrounding neighborhoods, the impact of removing parking on Doyle Park drive is considered to be significant and would require further outreach and study.

Outreach activities: To ensure that riders using the bus stops on Montgomery Drive in the Memorial Hospital area were aware of the proposed change, the opportunity to provide comment, and the upcoming City Council action on Route 4A/4B, bilingual notices were posted at the bus stops on Montgomery Drive serving the hospital and major medical buildings. Information about the proposal and the City Council meet was also provided with the project email alert and website.

Recommendation: Based on evaluation of the alternatives above, it is the Transit Division's assessment that the original proposal to consolidate service on Sonoma Avenue is the best approach for meeting the needs of the greatest number of riders because it provides two-way service on the higher ridership corridor, provides a more direct/faster trip, provides service within a close proximity to Montgomery Drive, and complements the transit service provided by Sonoma County Transit on Montgomery Drive.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Notification regarding this City Council item was made via:

- Reimagining CityBus project website
- Reimagining CityBus email alert
- Email to stakeholders
- Postings on NextDoor.com
- Mailings to affected neighborhoods
- Notices on bus stops

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Recommended Reimagining CityBus Phase I Map
- Attachment 2 – Petition from Appletree Drive neighborhood
- Resolution

CONTACT

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