

CityBus Temporary Transit Service Modification To Address Staffing Shortage

Santa Rosa City Council
January 25, 2022



Background

- In August 2021 CityBus service increased to 85% of pre-pandemic level
- Subsequently Bus Operator recruitment has not kept pace with attrition, resulting in net reduction in available drivers
 - Carrying 15 vacancies; currently have just 74% of budgeted positions filled
- Maintaining service with unsustainable level of overtime
- Highly precarious situation in light of ongoing pandemic impacts
 - One-day reductions during late December and early January
- Service reliability fundamental to rider experience
- Recommending modest temporary service reduction to maintain system reliability until staffing increases and stabilizes

Relationship of Proposal to Current Status

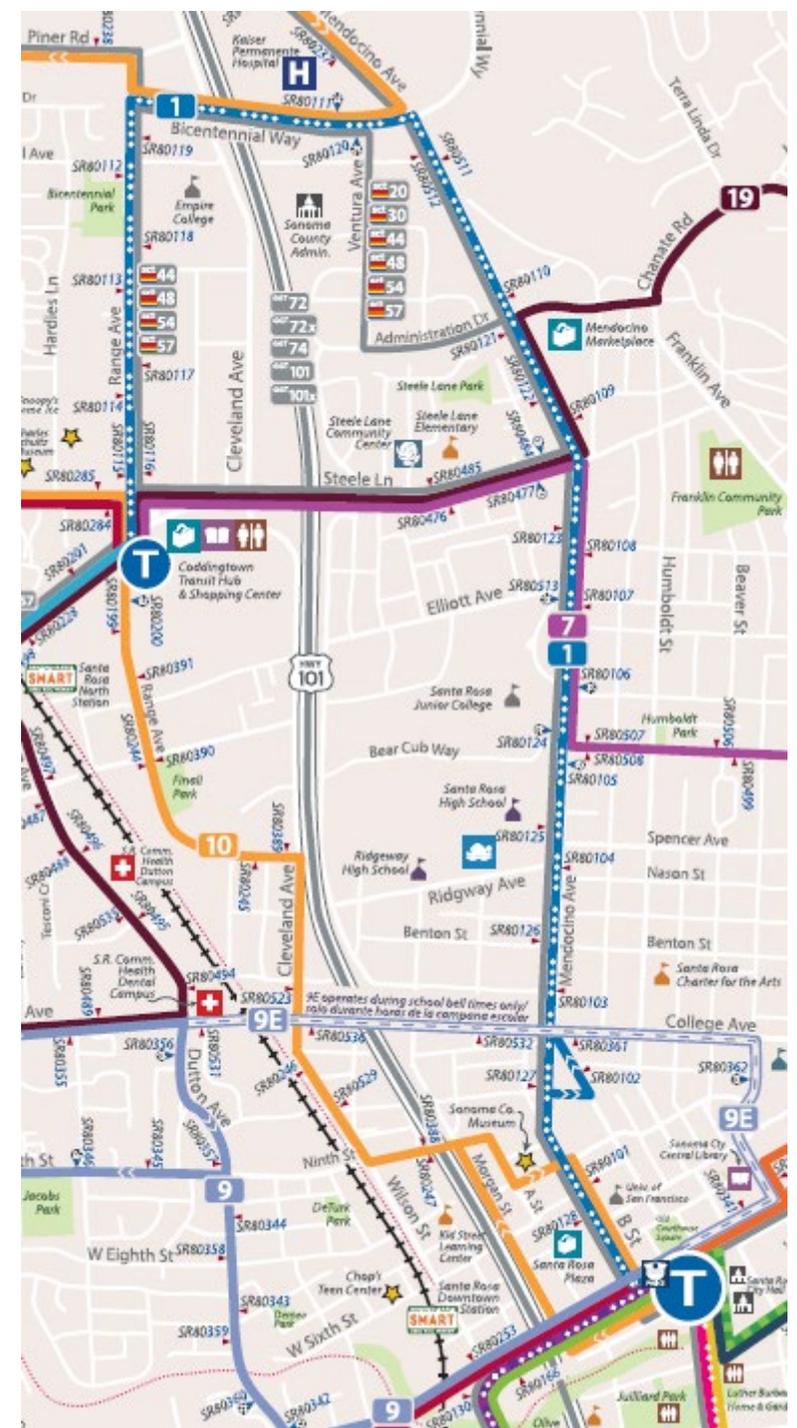
- Emergency reduction to Saturday-level service on weekdays on January 14 due to high number of staff quarantined in current surge
 - Operating weekday routing on Route 10 and weekday span on Route 15, as well as supplemental service on Route 6 for large school demand
- Staffing levels expected to recover over next few weeks as staff exit quarantine
 - Anticipate stepping up service levels accordingly (i.e., additional “Saturday Plus” service adding frequency on main routes)
- Staff proposal would restore weekday service at a more sustainable level until additional Bus Operators can be hired and trained

Staff Evaluation of Needs and Options

- Goals:
 - 1) Reduce scheduled service by 2 weekly driver rosters to ensure all scheduled service can be covered
 - 2) Minimize impacts on riders by preserving span of service and avoiding reductions on routes that are already operating at lower service levels
- Multiple scheduling options evaluated, with modest reduction of Route 1 (Mendocino Avenue) weekday frequency identified as least detrimental to transit access
 - Weekday frequency would be reduced from every 15 minutes to every 20 minutes
 - However, frequency would increase on Route 1 on Sundays

Route 1—Mendocino Avenue

- Travels between Transit Mall and Coddington Transit Hub via Mendocino Avenue, Bicentennial Way, and Range Avenue
- Serves Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa High School, County Center, and Kaiser Medical Center
- Highest frequency in CityBus system, along with Route 2/2B (Sebastopol Road)
- Defined as one of Santa Rosa's "high frequency transit corridors"



Proposed Temporary Service Reduction

Comparison of
Number of
Trips/Day—
Current and
Proposed Service

Current Service				Proposed Service			
Route	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Route	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Route 1	57	30	11	Route 1	41	29	20
Route 2	29	~	~	Route 2	29	~	~
Route 2B	28	27	10	Route 2B	28	27	10
Route 3	14	14	7	Route 3	14	14	7
Route 4	14	14	7	Route 4	14	14	7
Route 4B	14	~	~	Route 4B	14	~	~
Route 5	14	14	7	Route 5	15	14	7
Route 6	28	11	7	Route 6	29	11	7
Route 8	27	14	7	Route 8	27	14	7
Route 9	15	14	7	Route 9	15	14	7
Route 10	14	10	7	Route 10	14	10	7
Route 12	26	14	7	Route 12	28	14	7
Route 15	14	8	7	Route 15	14	8	7
Route 18	7	7	7	Route 18	7	7	7
Total	301	177	91	Total	289	176	100

Public and stakeholder outreach conducted

- Rider survey—online and in person at transit facilities
- Social media
- Notices with information on how to comment
- Outreach to stakeholders including SRJC and SRCS
- Internal outreach to City colleagues
- Discussion and coordination with SEIU leadership

Note: All public outreach activities conducted in English and Spanish

Rider Survey: Preference for Approach to Service Reduction

- The majority of respondents prefer the Route 1 frequency reduction to the uncertainty of day-by-day reductions
 - Slightly lower percentage of Spanish-speakers prefer reduction on Route 1 to day-to-day cuts (74% vs. 82% for English-speakers)
- This is consistent with comments received from riders

Approach to Reduction	Overall Rider Preference
Temporary frequency reduction on Route 1	82%
Cut runs on day-to-day basis as needed	18%

Rider Survey: Impact of Route 1 Change

- 86% of riders indicated that they would either experience no impact or be “somewhat impacted”
 - Rider comments focused on maintaining service in other part of the system (e.g., Roseland, Piner High School)
 - Responses from Spanish speakers in alignment with overall results
- 10% of riders said they would be “impacted” or “highly impacted”

Impact of Route 1 Reduction	Overall
No impact	36%
Somewhat impacted	50%
Impacted	5%
Highly impacted	5%
Other	4%

Staff Proposal

- Based on rider feedback staff recommends proceeding with temporary reduction to Route 1 frequency
- Recommend implementation of service change as soon as possible, likely in March 2022
- Outreach to riders will occur in advance of the change to minimize disruptions to travel
- 15-minute service will be restored to Route 1 as soon as staffing levels increase and stabilize (Target: Summer 2022)
- Transit Division working with Human Resources to expand and diversify marketing/outreach efforts related to Bus Operator recruitment

Recommendation

- It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council, by resolution, 1) approves a temporary minor reduction of weekday frequency on Santa Rosa CityBus Route 1 to ensure service reliability during the current staffing shortage, and 2) approves restoration of weekday frequency on Route 1 as soon as possible after staffing levels are increased and stabilized.
- Questions?