

January 26, 2012

Sacramento Regional Transit
Board of Directors
General Manager/CEO Michael Wiley
P.O. Box 2110
Sacramento, CA 95812-2110

Re: Proposed TransitRenewal Plan

Dear Board of Directors and General Manager/CEO Michael Wiley:

We write today on behalf of the Coalition on Regional Equity (CORE) to oppose the TransitRenewal plan as presented at the January 23, 2012 Regional Transit (RT) Board Meeting. We request the opportunity to work with RT staff to develop a new plan that provides necessary focus on equitable access and economic development.

CORE advocates for regional development that is equitable, sustainable and promotes public health for lower income people and communities of color in the greater Sacramento Region. The Coalition includes affordable housing advocates and developers, environmentalists, transportation advocates, homeless and anti-poverty advocates, social service providers, civil rights leaders and health groups. We have a vision for the Sacramento region that includes opportunities for all residents to live in communities rich with jobs, connected by transit as well as bicycle and pedestrian networks, and accessible to services and recreation. CORE's work on transportation is directed by the Transportation Equity Work Group, and examines transportation policies and funding at the local, regional, and state levels. CORE's goals include identifying and advocating for regional policies that will improve multi-modal transportation access in underserved communities.

Current Status of Transportation in the Sacramento Region

Transportation in the Sacramento Region has seen dramatic cuts to service over the past several years, and is currently failing to meet the needs of the population. Attachment 1 details the schedule and route changes between 2003 to 2010, showing a marked decrease in access to transit for Sacramento communities.

The purpose of Sacramento RT, as stated in its Strategic Plan,¹ is:

...to promote and enhance regional mobility and serve the public by providing quality transit services and solutions that improve the quality of life in the Sacramento region.

Further, the Strategic Plan describes the vision of Sacramento RT as:

A coordinated regional public transportation system that delivers quality and environmentally sensitive transit services that are an indispensable part of the fabric of communities throughout the Sacramento region.

However, despite that stated purpose and vision, Sacramento RT has prioritized their limited resources in a way that harms transit-dependent riders while preserving access to riders who already have access to multiple transportation options. In other words, RT's stated purpose and vision for transit in the Sacramento Region does not match up to its current practices. The current practices have the following effects on transit users:

- **Costs of operation increasingly transferred to the rider.** Service cuts mean that many people are forced to ride multiple transit lines to reach their destinations. With the elimination of transfers, transit riders are forced to endure both reduced services and increased fares. Recent service reductions and fare increases have correlated with a 16% decline in RT ridership.
- **Cuts to services that target lower income communities.** RT's service changes to date have been characterized by increased fares, cuts to night and weekend service, and the reduction of lines in low-income communities. By targeting services that are essential components of accessibility for low-income riders, RT's recent changes – motivated purely by a cost/benefit analysis of their services – disproportionately impact the very communities who depend on RT the most.
- **Expansions to services that target wealthier communities.** While reducing service access for low-income communities, RT has expanded access for wealthier communities through establishing and maintaining numerous "commuter" lines (those that only run once or twice around 8AM and 5PM). RT has also prioritized capital projects such as the "Green Line" to the Sacramento International Airport, a service that will primarily, if not exclusively, be used by wealthier riders.

Issues with the Proposed TransitRenewal Plan

The proposed TransitRenewal plan, by making its goal that of financial sustainability, makes profits the primary purpose of RT services. Such an economic perspective on services means

¹ Available at <http://www.sacrt.com/documents/Strategicflyer.pdf>

that those who most need the service are those who will be least likely to obtain access. Our concerns with the current TransitRenewal Plan are as follows:

- **The goal of the TransitRenewal plan is “Managing the system to achieve optimum financial sustainability and meet market demand.”²** Missing from this goal is desire to provide services in all communities, and at a price that is accessible for all community members. The current market-based mentality behind the TransitRenewal plan’s stated goal is limited to economic analysis, and does not consider equity.
- **Service provision is determined entirely by level of ridership.** Rather than seeking to provide minimum levels of service to all communities – as stated in RT’s Strategic Plan – the TransitRenewal plan proposes to determine level of service primarily by level of ridership. Such analysis negates any consideration of the demographics of the community or the need for such service, and could eventually mean that service is only available to communities with the resources to make such service profitable to RT.
- **The TransitRenewal plan transfers responsibility for maintaining services to the community.** Rather than ensure basic services for needy communities, RT charges community members with the task of garnering enough support (either through ridership numbers or private donations to RT) to keep their lines running. Lower income communities are the least likely to have the resources to launch such a campaign, meaning they will be the most likely to see additional RT cuts in services.

Proposed Transportation Solutions for the Sacramento Region

We fully recognize that RT is limited by a shrinking budget, and needs to be frugal in the allocation of limited resources. However, the way such limited resources are prioritized needs to focus on communities most dependent on transit. Rather than the current TransitRenewal plan, we propose the following principles be used to guide all future RT planning:

- **Level of need – in addition to level of ridership – should be the main factor in determining level of service.** Using ridership levels is a business-approach to what is intended to be a social service. In times of limited resources, RT should prioritize the money it has on the communities who are in most need of reliable transit services, working to provide (as stated in RT’s Strategic Plan) “... at least minimum levels of transit services to all areas in the district.” The definition of “minimum” in this case is the minimum threshold required for transit-dependent riders in any community in

² “Guiding Principles, Performance Measures, and Performance Monitoring.” *Regional Transit Issue Paper*. Issued October 18, 2011 for October 24, 2011 Board Meeting. Page 4.
Available at <http://iportal.sacrt.com/WebApps/srtdbm/archives.asp>

Sacramento to be able to successfully gain access to work, school, shopping, and service locations.

- **RT should not expand capital-intensive service, including light rail, when it cannot adequately service existing needs.** It does not make sense that we would invest in the creation of new lines when we fail to provide adequate service for existing lines and riders. While we appreciate the motivation for RT to expand services to new areas and clientele, such project should always be secondary to the provision and maintenance of basic services to existing transit customers.
- **RT must return to one fare for a two-phase trip. Transfers must be returned and future electronic passes should provide for an additional trip boarding in the same direction or time frame.** To provide the full scale of access to riders, an integrated transit system includes the usage of multiple connecting lines to create a comprehensive map of service availability. Riders should not be penalized because the system is constructed in a way that requires them to take more than one bus or train to reach their destination.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of our recommendations. Should you have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Alvin Vaughn, CORE Transportation Equity Work Group Chair, at (916) 529-8461 or Alvin@ubuntugreen.org.

Sincerely,

Alvin D. Vaughn, Jr.
Director, Advocacy and Communications
Ubuntu Green

Jonathan Ellison
Board President
Environmental Council of Sacramento

Frances Gracechild
Executive Director
Resources for Independent Living

Barbara Stanton
Founder/Director
RiderShip for the Masses

Kendra Bridges
Land Use Policy Director
Sacramento Housing Alliance

ATTACHMENT 1: REGIONAL TRANSIT SCHEDULE AND ROUTE CHANGES

SUMMARY FOR THE YEARS 2003-2010

NEW ROUTES: 2003 - (4) paid by RT 2009 – (1) paid for by McClellan park

ELIMINATED ROUTES: (67)

Data compiled by Barbara Stanton from Regional Transit Timetable Books for 2003, 2005 through 2010 (2004 unavailable).

2003 SEPTEMBER (81 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (19) 5,6,7,8,11,15,54,56,61,62,63,64,65,81,87,141,143,light rail	
New routes (4) 4, 37(neighborhood Ride),65,light rail (extension to Meadowview)	
Discontinued trips on routes (7) 1, 14, 28, 30, 36, 68, 75	
Discontinued routes (2) 58, 139	

Missing Year 2004 – Timetable Book Not Available

2005 JUNE (106 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (64) 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,13,14,15,17,19,20,21,22,23,25,26,28,30,31,33,34,36,37,38,47,50E,51,54,55,56,61,62,63,64,65,66,67,68,72,73,74,75,76,79,81,82,83,84,86,87,88,91,100,104,109,141,143,239,255, Light rail (change direction to on Folsom line)	
New routes (0)	
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (6) 52, 53, 57, 60, 66	

2005 SEPTEMBER (101 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (43) 1,5,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,21,23,24,25,28,30,31,36,37,38,47,51,54,55,56,61,62,63,64,67,68,72,73,74,75,81,82,91,93,100,104,141,143,251,261	
New routes (0)	
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (4) 12, 79,236, 262	

REGIONAL TRANSIT SCHEDULE AND ROUTE CHANGES, CONTINUED

2006 SEPTEMBER (98 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (27)	
9,10,22,23,28,30,31,38,50E,51,67,68,72,75,76,89,93,102,104,105,106,143,205,206,255, 261, Light rail	
New routes (0)	
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (3)	17(neighbor ride), 235, 239
2007 JANUARY (98 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (2)	38, Light Rail
New routes (0)	
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (0)	
2008 JANUARY (94)	
Schedule and route changes (27)	
2,6,8,9,10, 18,21,22,28,30,31,36,47,50E,51,55,61,63,68,72,83,87,104,143,200,255	
New routes (0)	
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (4)	64, 76, 91, 105
2009 JANUARY (95 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (12)	
4,5,19,21,62,72,80,84,87,93,228,255	
New routes (1)	85 (neighborhood ride funded by McClellan Park) limited stops
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (0)	

REGIONAL TRANSIT SCHEDULE AND ROUTE CHANGES, CONTINUED

2009 SEPTEMBER (92 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (23)	5,20,23,25,30,31,36,55,56,63,72,73,75,81,83,141,142,210,212,213,213,261
New routes (0)	
Discontinued trips on routes (0)	
Discontinued routes (3)	37,140,249

2010 JUNE (62 ROUTES)	
Schedule and route changes (4) Minor schedule changes Weekday 74, 75 Sat 55	
Route and schedule changes 28	
Service frequency changes (18) weekday 1,2,6,34,38,41 Sat LR(2) 1, 30, 51,81	
Sun LR (2) 23, 30, 56, 81	
New routes (0)	
Discontinued Service after 9 PM Weekdays (25) Sat (14) Sun (11)	
Weekdays: LR (2lines),1,13,14,15,21,23,30,38,51,56,61,62,67,68,72,80,81,82,86,87,88,93	
Sat: LR(2lines) 1,15,21,22,23,30,51,56,67,68,81,88	
Sun: LR(2lines) 1,15,21,51,67,68,81, 88	
Discontinued routes Weekday (28) Sat (13) Sun (4)	
Weekday:	
4,8,9,10,18,20,36,50E,63,73,83,89,94,95,100,101,102,104,106,107,141,142,200,201,210	
226,251,261	
Sat:	
5,6,8,13,14,16,24,28,54,61,65,74,143	
Sun:	
8,13,14,22	