



November 11, 2018

Regional Transit Board of Directors
Henry Li, General Manager/CEO
1400 29th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Re: Board Item 4: Route Optimization Study

Dear Board of Directors and Mr. Li:

The Sacramento Transit Riders Union (SacTRU) has been an active participant in the ongoing route optimization study and is concerned that the process is biasing the narrative toward a predetermined outcome. We believe the key assumptions of this study need to be modified and urge the board to not rush any decisions based on the artificial deadlines of this project, allowing adequate time to develop a comprehensive plan for the successful modernization of our system.

There are several limitations to this study, such as the assumption of no new funding sources and the limited scope of only looking at bus service, which make this study an interesting thought process but limits its real-world application. SacRT is actively working to secure additional funding, expand our system boundaries, and incorporate new technologies to provide comprehensive accessible service. We believe that while this study may provide a unique perspective on the tradeoffs between frequency and coverage, it does not provide a comprehensive analysis of our system and should be taken with a grain of salt.

Since February, SacTRU has expressed our concerns about this project resulting in predetermined outcomes and limited incorporation of public participation and stakeholder comments. We are very concerned about the static images that have been presented to us which create inflexible binary options. The analysis is presented to participants as an either-or choice between high coverage or high frequency (which is often leadingly labeled high ridership). Indeed, the study seems to further bias the narrative by directing online survey takers, no matter what their priorities are, towards the high frequency option (see Attachment I). Following stakeholder engagement events the charts and recommendations have not been updated to incorporate comments or concerns. We feel the information being presented to the board is unnecessarily biased towards high frequency being the ultimate solution for our system. SacTRU members believe that improving service frequency can be part of the solution, but should not be perceived as the only or best solution.

After reviewing the materials provided, our members had several concerns about the following key elements which are left out of this study and should be part of the planning and modernization process for our system:

- **Transfers**: The location, infrastructure, and accessibility of suggested transfer points should be considered. A comprehensive study of SacRT's bus stops should be conducted to better understand what resources and enhancements are needed to make a system designed around transfers safe and viable.
- **Transfer Times**: A system designed on transfers rather than direct point-to-point service may be off-putting and difficult to navigate for riders. Even when transferring between two routes that are as frequent as every 15-minutes, having to transfer can make frequency no more useful than a 30-minute route that takes you to your destination. Additionally, any bus service redesign should be done in sync with light rail service, which we are concerned was not part of this study so far. Bus service and light rail service should be timed so that riders do not miss essential transfers.
- **Resilient Coverage Alternative**: If one bus route is affected, riders have more options to take alternative service to get to their final destination with more coverage and the options it provides. With frequent but limited coverage service this redundancy is lost and riders can be stranded.

- Weekend & Late Night Service: Not all service is created equal, while some routes may benefit from later service, there may be little demand for them on the weekend. While the high frequency recommendation suggests across the board that the same routes will be available Monday-Sunday, that might not be the best solution for every route. Our members urge a more studied and thoughtful rollout of extended service. Additionally, our members found it shocking that service on the 51 bus was even suggested to be reduced on weekends and nights in the high frequency option. This displayed to them a clear misunderstanding of the priorities of our community by the consultant.
- Route Length: Routes in both suggestions appear to extend from around our current 50 minutes to as long as 2 hours. This could have a variety of scheduling impacts.
- Direct Service: Our riders are concerned about the loss of direct service between major traffic generators without requiring a transfer to another bus or light rail.

SacTRU urges the Board to extend this route optimization process to include new budget projections, all existing and planned expansions of the system, and make decisions based on the full picture. A compromise between our current system and the suggestions from this limited scope project will likely best serve riders. Taking the best ideas and innovations from the consultants, while keeping our local and historical knowledge in mind, we should move forward to build a system that connects riders with economic opportunities and vital necessities in an innovative and comprehensive manner. Please include this letter in the public record.

Sincerely,

SacTRU

Attachment I: Online Survey Results

Below are screen shots of the alternatives suggested based on the survey taker's priority selection. For each priority, high frequency was provided as the solution. This is an inherently biased survey instrument and conclusions drawn from it should be limited.

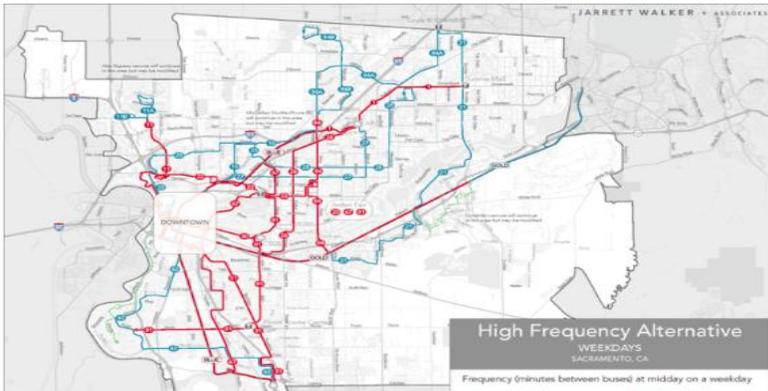
1. Some service for everyone = High Frequency Alternative

1. Transit can be designed with different priorities in mind. Some of them must be traded-off against one another. Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

Please select your top four priorities.

- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers
- Shorter walks
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network
- Shorter travel times

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



More service in busy places +
Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks

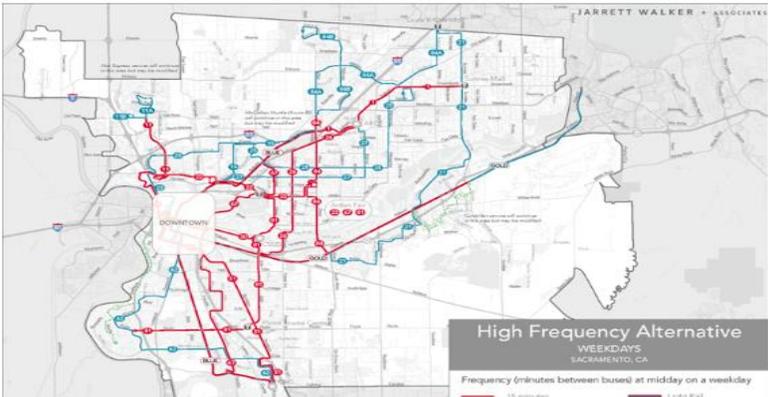
2. More service in busy places = High Frequency Alternative

1. Transit can be designed with different priorities in mind. Some of them must be traded-off against one another. Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

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Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



More service in busy places +
Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks

3. Faster Transfers = High Frequency Alternative

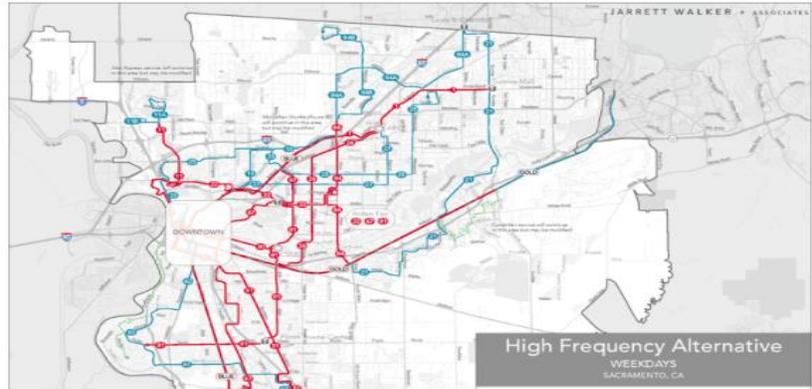
1. Transit can be designed with different priorities in mind. Some of them must be traded-off against one another.

Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

Please select your top four priorities.

- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers**
- Shorter walks
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network
- Shorter travel times

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



More service in busy places +
Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks

4. Shorter Walks = High Frequency Alternative

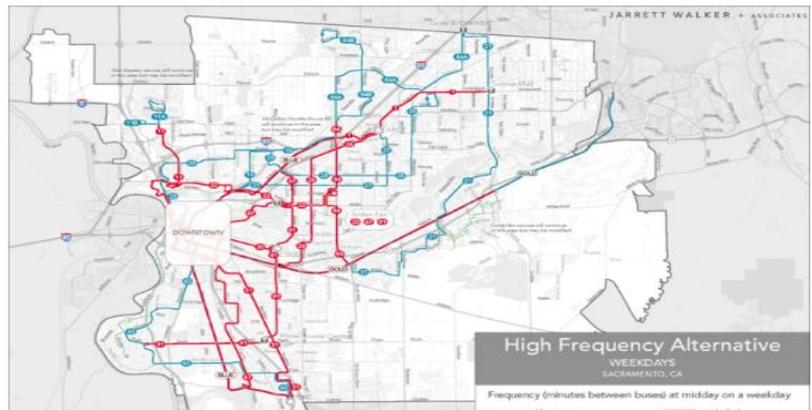
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Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

Please select your top four priorities.

- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers
- Shorter walks**
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network
- Shorter travel times

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



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Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks

5. Shorter Waits = High Frequency Alternative

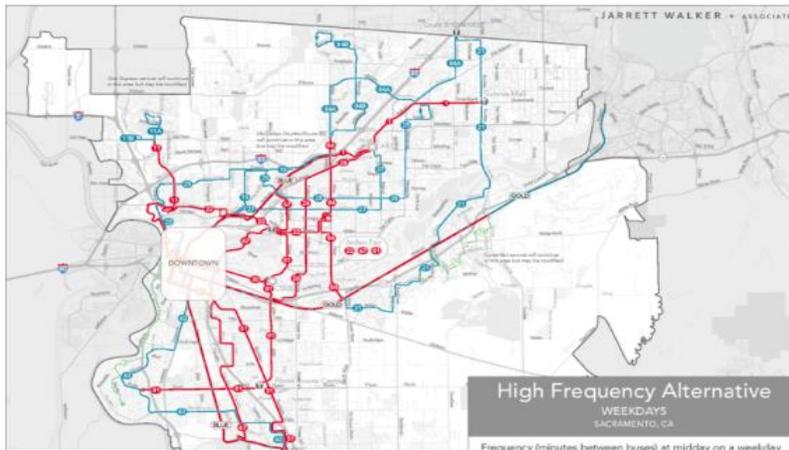
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- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers
- Shorter walks
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network
- Shorter travel times

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



More service in busy places +
Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks

6. Fights Congestion = High Frequency Alternative

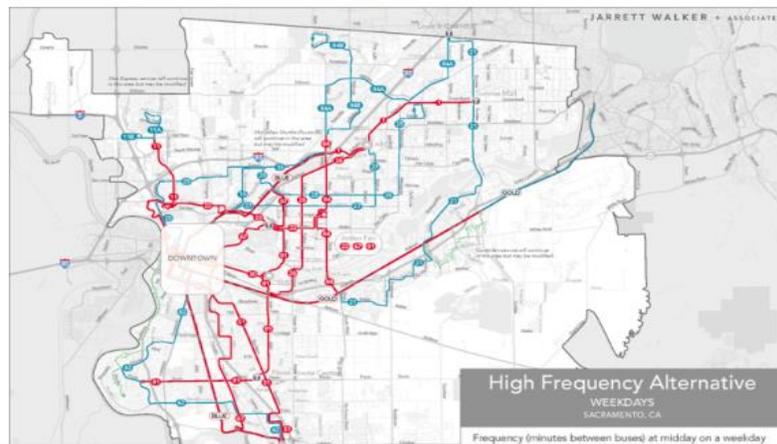
1. Transit can be designed with different priorities in mind. Some of them must be traded-off against one another.

Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

Please select your top four priorities.

- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers
- Shorter walks
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network
- Shorter travel times

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



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Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks

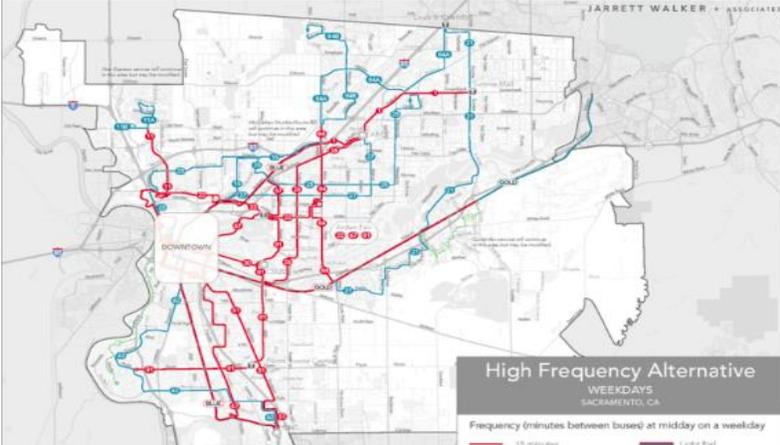
7. Simpler Network = High Frequency Alternative

1. Transit can be designed with different priorities in mind. Some of them must be traded-off against one another.
Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

Please select your top four priorities.

- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers
- Shorter walks
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network**
- Shorter travel times

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



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Shorter waits +
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Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
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- Shorter walks

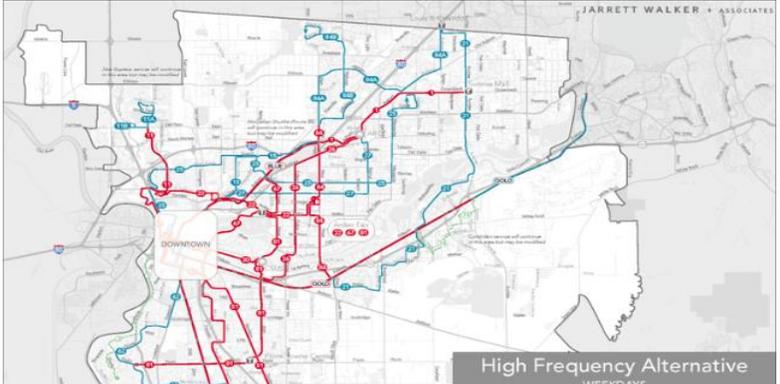
8. Shorter Travel Time = High Frequency Alternative

1. Transit can be designed with different priorities in mind. Some of them must be traded-off against one another.
Which of the following priorities are most important to you?

Please select your top four priorities.

- Some service for everyone
- More service in busy places
- Faster transfers
- Shorter walks
- Shorter waits
- Fights congestion
- Simpler network
- Shorter travel times**

Based upon the priorities you selected above, here is how each alternative performs.



More service in busy places +
Shorter waits +
Fights congestion +
Simpler network +
Shorter travel times +
Faster transfers +
- Some service for everyone
- Shorter walks