



Solano Transportation Authority

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SOLANO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Member Agencies:

Benicia • Dixon • Fairfield • Rio Vista • Suisun City • Vacaville • Vallejo • Solano County

423 Main Street, Suisun City, CA 94585-2413 • Telephone (707) 424-6075 / Fax (707) 424-6074

Email: info@sta.ca.gov • Website: sta.ca.gov

April 29, 2025

Ms. Beth Kranda
Executive Director
Solano County Transit (SolTrans)
311 Sacramento Street
Vallejo, CA 94590

RE: STA Comments on Solano Express COA Existing Conditions Report

Dear Ms. Kranda:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the January 2025 Solano Express Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) Existing Conditions Report.

STA staff comments were reviewed earlier this year at our February and March Solano County Intercity Transit Consortium and STA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and unanimously recommended the comments to the STA Board for approval. The STA Board initially had this item included in their March STA Board, agenda but was tabled for discussion at their April 9, 2025 meeting. It was at that meeting that the STA Board unanimously approved the attached staff comments for your consideration after a lengthy discussion (See enclosed comments).

Two key points that STA Board discussed regarding the Solano Express COA at their April 9th meeting were: 1) Moving the route terminus from Walnut Creek BART station to North Concord and Concord Bart stations for the Blue, Yellow and Green Lines and 2) the objective of increasing ridership versus a balance between lifeline/service coverage and ridership. Both are comments that reflect the STA Board's discussion in the attachment, in addition to other updated comments.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you and the rest of the Solano Express Funding Partners, MTC, and the public to complete the Solano Express COA. This document will be utilized in conjunction with the MTC/STA funded Solano Express Connected Mobility Plan and Transit and the Rideshare Element of the STA Comprehensive Transportation Plan update to determine the future of the Solano Express Service.

Please contact Robert Guerrero, STA Deputy Executive Director/Director of Planning, if you have any questions regarding the attached comments.

Sincerely,

Daryl K. Halls
Executive Director

Cc: STA Board Members
SolTrans Board Members
Solano County Intercity Transit Consortium Members

Enc: STA Comments on Solano Express COA Solano Express Network Existing Conditions Report



STA Comments on Solano Express COA Solano Express Network Existing Conditions Report

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- 1) Please correct references to the Solano Express Bus service. The COA Existing Conditions Report refers to the service as SolTrans Express Service throughout the report.
- 2) As it relates to the Solano Express Bus Service Network, consider providing additional information regarding the role of the STA Board and its funding partners in decisions related to service changes and marketing of the system.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

- 1) Elimination of Green Line/Proposed Merger with Red Line

We understand the need to reduce service hours systemwide in order to address the SolanoExpress Bus fiscal cliff beginning in FY 2027-28 and see the Green Line as an opportunity to reduce hours. STA is interested in addressing the fiscal cliff by exploring other more affordable service options for the Green Line to continue service for residents from Suisun City and Fairfield to continue accessing El Cerrito-Del Norte BART.

The STA Board approved forwarding these COA comments to SolTrans.

- 2) Moving the Southern End of the Blue and Yellow Line to North Concord BART.

While the round-trip cycle time for each bus could improve (see below), it is not sufficient to increase the number of trips provided with existing resources and would negatively impact customers.

Customers who are transferring to BART, presuming most, if not all, are destined to San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, or another station west of Walnut Creek BART, would experience a fare increase per round trip each day. Using the BART timetable to calculate the difference in travel time on BART and Google Trip Planner to calculate the difference in highway travel time (based on road conditions, not scheduled bus times since buses would arrive early if traffic is not as bad as the schedule allows once they are on I-680 and no longer need to pick up passengers) passengers would experience an increase of four minutes based on best case scenario and increase of two minutes based on worst case scenario. (A savings of eight to ten minutes on the bus offset by a 12-minute longer BART ride.)

In addition to higher fares and longer trip times for BART users, shifting from Walnut Creek to North Concord will eliminate regional connections to several bus routes that provide access to employment opportunities in Walnut Creek and express service to Bishop Ranch, Dublin, and Pleasanton. By contrast, North Concord BART is served by one local County Connection route. Attachment A illustrates the existing transit connections at the Walnut Creek BART station.

The suggested alternative of continuing to Concord BART after serving North Concord BART negates any time savings in bus cycle times that are achieved by serving North Concord instead of Walnut Creek. While bus connections are possible at North Concord BART, this is a new market and eliminates the existing connections to larger employment centers possible at Walnut Creek BART. Attachment B illustrates the existing transit connections at North Concord BART.

Replica data from Spring 2024 indicated that there are 2,591 work trips each weekday between Vallejo, Benicia, Fairfield, and Suisun City on the one hand and Concord on the other. However, there were 3,525 work trips from these four cities to Walnut Creek, San Ramon (including Bishop Ranch), Dublin, and Pleasanton (including Hacienda Business Park), of which 2,053 were to Walnut Creek alone. While there is potential demand for service to Concord, given limited resources, there is no justification for abandoning an existing market to serve another market while providing no benefit (indeed higher fares and potential longer trip times) for those customers using Solano Express to transfer to BART.

The STA Board approved forwarding these COA comments to SolTrans, however, STA Board members discussed this comment at length and requested more ridership information on this for further discussion.

3) Davis Terminus

The existing Blue Line service to Davis is underutilized. This could be the result of the existing terminus not being centrally located on the UC Campus and lacking transit connections (the only transit connection is the Causeway Connection to the UC Medical Center in Sacramento) and a schedule that does not match predominant travel patterns. There is a high demand for travel from North Solano County and Davis, and the combination of the high cost of living in Davis, along with the growth at UC Davis, is likely to generate increased demand in future years. According to Spring 2024 Replica Data, there were 11,570 weekday trips from Fairfield, Vacaville, and Dixon to Davis. These were one-way trips originating in these three cities and terminating in Davis. If the Blue Line could capture one percent of these trips that would translate to 115 trips per day in each direction. Therefore, removing the Blue Line service to Davis is not recommended.

One of the predominant comments received by the consultant preparing the Short Range Transit Plan for the City of Davis was the desire for more service to Vacaville and Dixon. It is recommended that the Blue Line terminus be relocated to Memorial Union, which is in the heart of the UC Davis campus and has numerous transit connections including Yolobus 42 with service to Sacramento, West Sacramento, Sacramento Airport, and Woodland as well as several Unitrans routes providing access throughout the City of Davis. This relocation is supported by Unitrans management.

The STA Board approved forwarding these COA comments to SolTrans.

4) Ridership versus Service/Lifeline Coverage

STA recommends SolTrans consider evaluating the COA service concepts with a balanced perspective of increasing ridership and service/lifeline coverage, particularly Solano Express service coverage outside of the southern portion of the County. In addition, major objectives that guide the future service of Solano Express are recommended to be discussed in advance with the Solano Express funding partners before being finalized.

5) Walnut Creek BART Station Terminus

The COA justifies access to North Concord/Concord BART stations instead of the current Walnut Creek Station in order to accommodate Diablo Valley College students. STA staff recommends SolTrans reprioritize the COA concepts to provide better access to local college institutions (such as Solano Community College) and UC Davis, one of the most prestigious college institutions in California for its medical, agricultural, engineering and planning programs.

In addition, Solano Community College students overwhelmingly voted in April 2019 to renew their self-imposed transportation fee to provide free transit service for SCC students. As a result, over \$1 million in student fees have contributed to Solano county-wide transit services, with SolTrans receiving \$423,546. Therefore, maintaining reliable, convenient and more frequent service to SCC is recommended.

This comment was also discussed at length with the STA Board. The STA Board approved forwarding these COA comments to SolTrans with general support.

6) Fairgrounds Drive Solano Express Service

Do not cancel any Solano Express connections planned for the Fairgrounds Drive Project. STA, County of Solano, the City of Vallejo, and Caltrans have been planning for this transportation improvement project. STA has coordinated with SolTrans in the design of the project on multiple occasions. Transit services are an important aspect to the project's success as hub and could jeopardize transportation funding already allocated towards its completion.

CONCLUSION – SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

- 1) Refer to the Solano Express Bus Service correctly in the report
- 2) Add further details regarding STA and its funding partner's role in the Solano Express Bus service change and marketing service decision making process. STA Board members emphasized that the recommendations from the Transit 2030 Policy Committee include the need for clear communication and collaboration between the STA and SolTrans Boards.
- 3) STA is interested in addressing the fiscal cliff by exploring other more affordable service options for the Green Line to continue service for residents from Suisun City and Fairfield to continue accessing El Cerrito-Del Norte BART.
- 4) Provide additional information demonstrating why the North Concord and Concord is the better location the Blue and Yellow Line southern terminus compared to its existing location at the Walnut Creek BART Station.
- 5) Removing the Blue line Service to UC Davis is not recommended; retain Blue Line service to Davis and relocate terminal to Memorial Union.
- 6) Evaluate COA service concepts with a balanced perspective of increasing ridership and service/lifeline coverage, for example Solano Express service coverage outside of the southern portion of the County.
- 7) Prioritize and maintain Solano Express access to local college institutions (such as Solano Community College) and UC Davis.
- 8) Do not cancel Solano Express transit service planned for the Solano Fairgrounds.

Attachments:

- A. Walnut Creek BART Station Map
- B. North Concord BART Station Map
- C. Concord BART Station Map

Transit Stops

Paradas del tránsito

公車站地圖



**Transit
Information**

**Walnut Creek
Station**

Walnut Creek



Downtown Map



Transit Lines

County Connection County Connection

Weekday Routes

- 1 Rossmoor Shopping Center
- 1 Mitchell Drive Park & Ride/Shadelands
- 4 The Free Ride/Downtown Trolley
- 5 Creekside Drive
- 9 Diablo Valley College
- 14 Concord BART
- 21 San Ramon Transit Center

Express Routes

- 93X Kirker Pass Express
- 95X San Ramon Express
- 96X Bishop Ranch Express
- 98X Martinez/Walnut Creek Express

Weekend Routes

- 4 The Free Ride/Downtown Trolley
- 301 Via Monte & Ygnacio Valley Rd./ John Muir Medical Center
- 311 Concord BART
- 321 San Ramon Transit Center

School Routes

- 601 Castle/Hill
- 602 Trotter

Solano Express SolanoExpress

- Blue Fairfield/Vacaville/Davis
- Yellow Vallejo/Benicia

Wheels Bus

- 70X Dublin/Pleasanton BART

Transit Stops

Attachment B

Paradas del tránsito

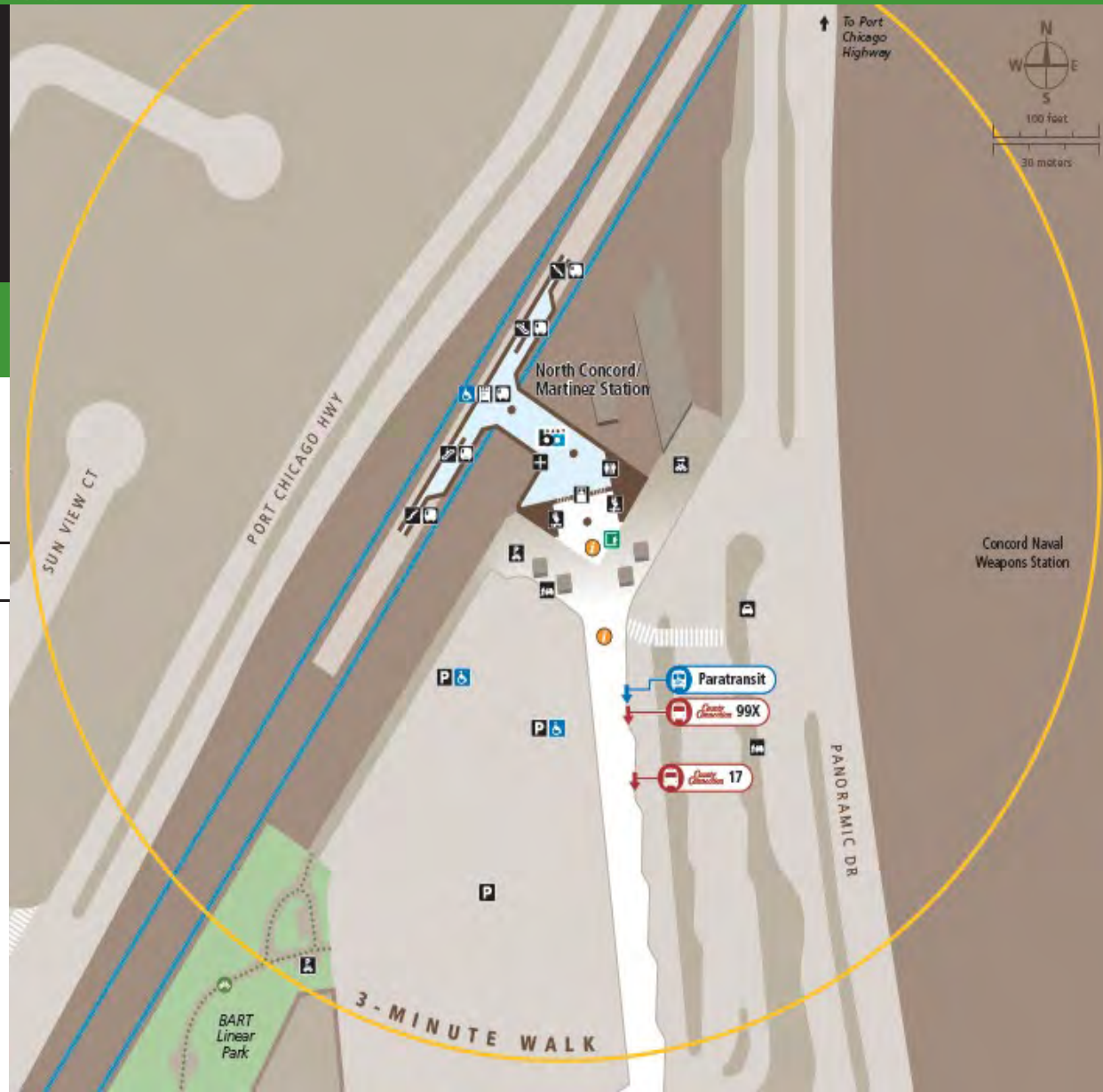
公車站地圖



Transit Information

North
Concord/
Martinez
Station

Concord



Transit Lines



County Connection

Local Bus Lines

17 BART Concord

99X Martinez Amtrak

Note: County Connection does not provide weekend bus service at this station.

Transit Stops

Paradas del tránsito

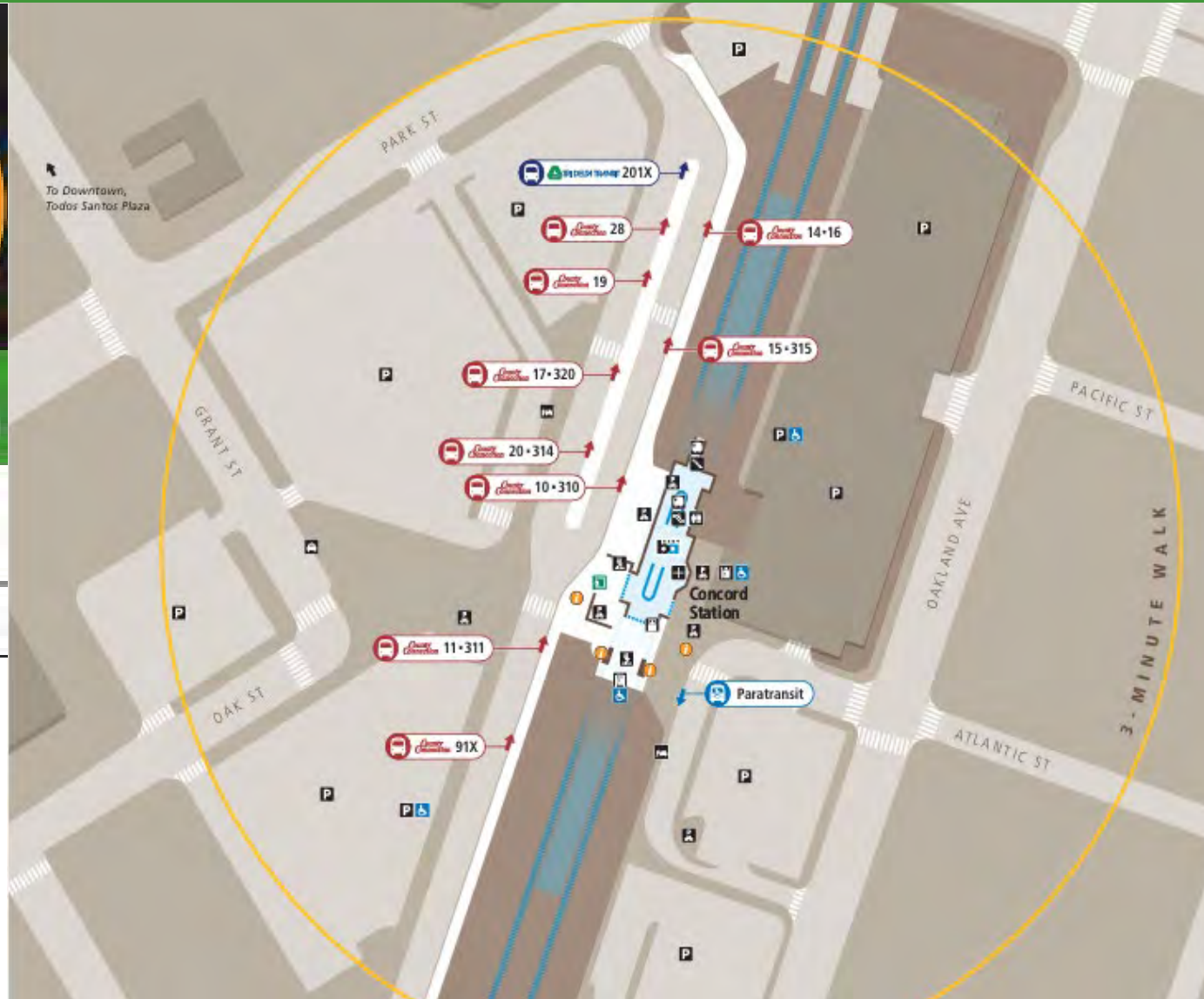
公車站地圖



Transit
Information

Concord
Station

Concord



Transit Lines



County Connection

Local Bus Lines

- 10 Clayton
- 11 Pleasant Hill BART via Oak Grove Road
- 14 Pleasant Hill BART via Monument Blvd.
- 15 Walnut Creek BART via Treat Blvd.
- 16 Martinez Amtrak via Alhambra Ave.
- 17 North Concord BART via Solano Way
- 19 Martinez Amtrak via Pacheco
- 20 Diablo Valley College
- 28 Martinez Amtrak via Diablo Valley College
- 91X Concord Commuter Express

Weekend Only Bus Lines

- 310 Clayton
- 311 Walnut Creek BART via Treat Blvd.
- 314 Diablo Valley College via Monument Blvd.
- 315 Landana Dr.
- 320 Diablo Valley College via Willow Pass Rd.



Tri Delta Transit

Express Bus Line

- 201X Pittsburg/Bay Point BART