

# **Best Laid Plans: When Service Expansion Meets Reality**

**Michael Eshleman**

*Service Planning Manager*

*AC Transit, Oakland, CA*

# AGENDA

- ▶ AC at-a-glance
- ▶ What our communities look like
- ▶ ACGo Background
- ▶ Implementation
- ▶ What Really Happened
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Cost Forecasts
- ▶ Quality Control
- ▶ Solutions
- ▶ Next Steps



# AC AT-A-GLANCE

- ▶ Serving the East Bay since 1960
- ▶ 524 square miles, 1.5 million residents
- ▶ Elected Board
- ▶ Four operating divisions
  - ▶ 155 lines
  - ▶ 2 Flex service areas
- ▶ 630 buses
  - ▶ Mix of 24', 30', 40', 60', MCI
  - ▶ 15 double-deckers soon
- ▶ 1,344 active operators
- ▶ 167k weekday riders
  - ▶ 92k on Sat, 73k on Sun
  - ▶ 55 million annually

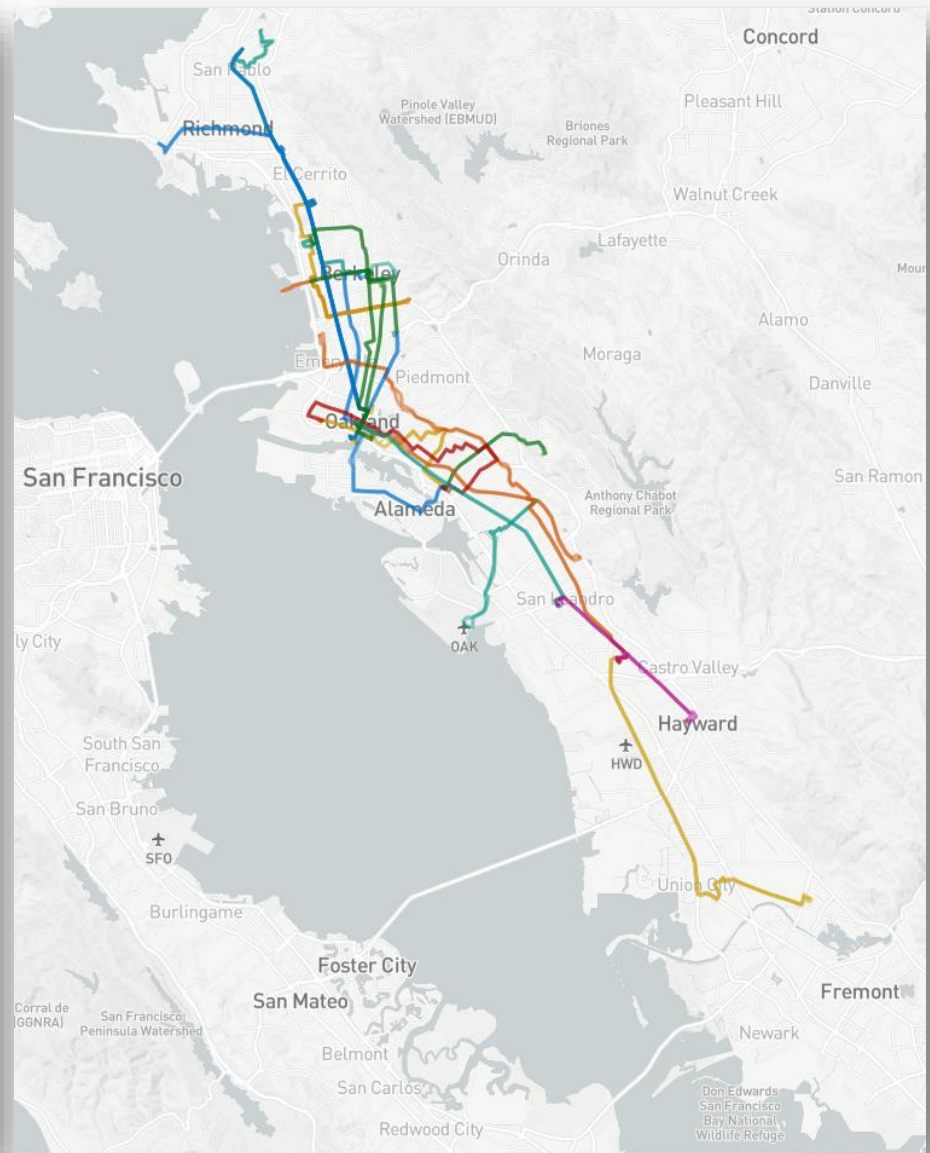
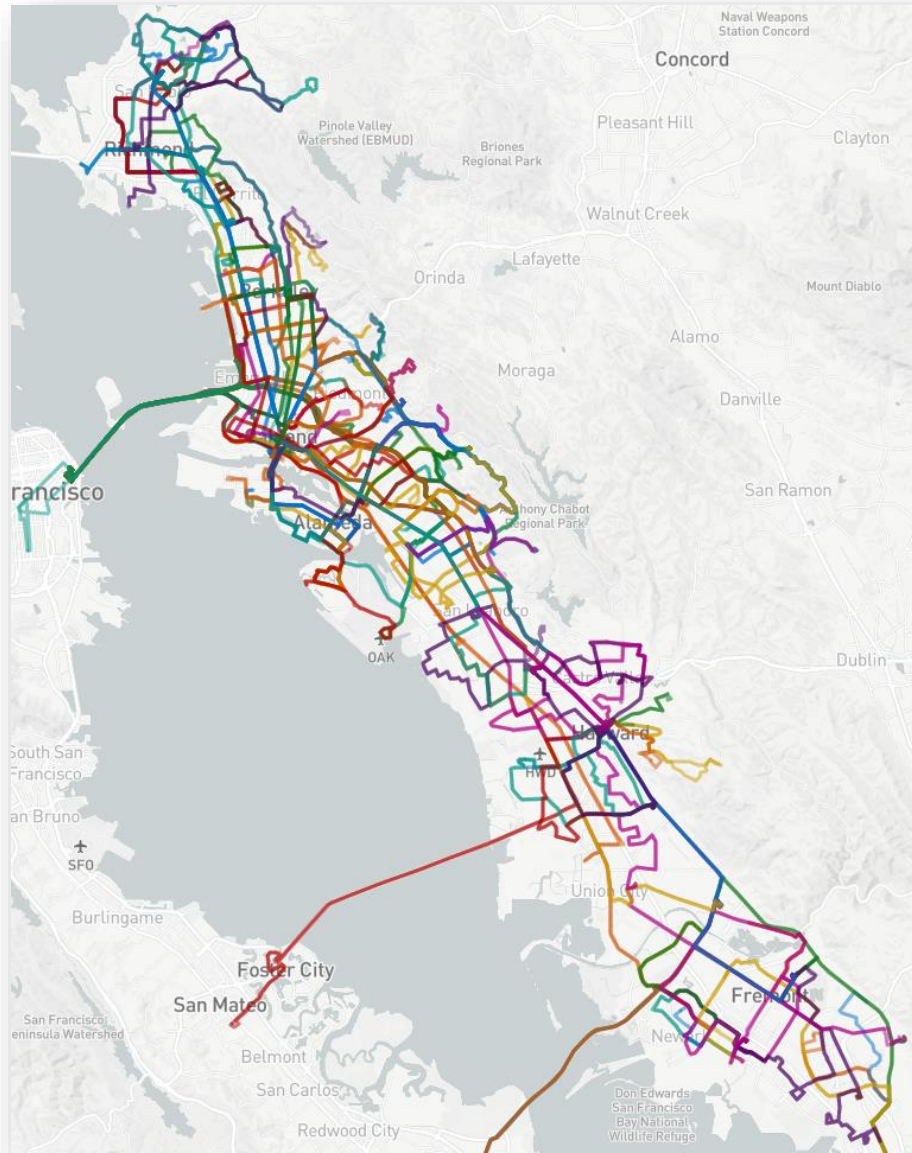




# AC AT-A-GLANCE

All service

15 minutes or better





**John D**

@diamonon

Follow

Got a full row 2 myself so I can sleep on this 1.5hr bus ride! [#CommuteLife](#)  
[#TodayWasAGoodDay!](#) [#ACTransit](#)  
[#IdidntHave2useMyAK](#) [#littlethings](#)



**Rex Stone**

@RaiderRex

Follow

Fuck everything about [#ACTransit](#)

6:05 PM - 19 Oct 2016 from [Oakland, CA](#)



**MTier**

@MiltonTweets001

Follow

[#ACTransit](#) Bus #11 has cause so many delays to the community. Leaves earlier than stated bus time. Please do something [@511SFBay](#)

6:38 AM - 31 Aug 2016



**pd0ra**

@pd0ra

Follow

[#ACTransit](#) [#49B](#) waiting for God knows what when I could have gotten coffee. FFS

7:08 AM - 16 Aug 2016







# Transbay Transit Center



## East Bay BRT



## Double-deckers



# OUR COMMUNITIES

- ▶ Service from Richmond south to Fremont
  - ▶ From San Francisco to the East Bay hills
- ▶ Wealthy communities in the hills, low-income neighborhoods in East and West Oakland, Richmond, and Hayward
- ▶ Gentrifying communities near BART and Transbay lines
- ▶ Diverse service area
  - ▶ 15% African American, 26% Asian/Pacific Islander, 25% Hispanic



# ACGO BACKGROUND

- ▶ Voters passed Measure BB in November 2014
  - ▶ \$25 million/year for AC Transit
- ▶ Staff had been developing and vetting some form of COA since 2010
  - ▶ Fits and starts
- ▶ Significant public outreach
  - ▶ Four phases
- ▶ Board adoption January 2016
- ▶ Implementation split into three “packages”



# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- ▶ Line 1 needed to be split ASAP to make way for BRT
- ▶ Forced implementation of first package to June 2016
- ▶ Focused on training
- ▶ Basic customer information
- ▶ Package 2 – Oakland and Berkeley – set for December 2016
- ▶ Package 3 – Hayward, San Leandro, and Castro Valley – set for June 2017



# WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

- ▶ Line 1 was split into three lines – 1, 6, and 10
  - ▶ BRT team had indicated construction was imminent
  - ▶ Turns out it wasn't, construction didn't start until January 2017
- ▶ Recruitment Issues
- ▶ Training Issues
- ▶ Leadership turnover
  - ▶ Four Transportation Directors in 18 months
- ▶ Cost forecasts
- ▶ Quality Control



Steve Geller  
@stgeller4

Follow



I like the new #ACTransit 6 bus on Telegraph Ave;  
Didn't need the Rapid; new line runs often enough.

4:30 PM - 6 Jul 2016



**jesheekah**  
@jesheekah

Follow



[#ACtransit](#) eliminating 26 bus disrupted my work-school flow! I need to find a direct route to get to the little girl's school in time. 😡

5:04 PM - 27 Mar 2017 from [Oakland, CA](#)



**Branwen**  
@primal\_heart

Follow



New Bus Line, why you got to be so complicated? I just want to go home.

[#actransit](#) [#woes](#)

5:28 PM - 27 Mar 2017



**jennifer loring**  
@jenniferloring

Follow



These older buses hauling ass down 880 feel just like Willard's Whizzer. People died on that ride. [#actransit](#)

5:11 PM - 11 May 2017





# RECRUITMENT

- ▶ Operator workforce was below levels needed for existing service
  - ▶ Expand anyway
- ▶ Needed to expand training classes from 17 to 21 operators/month and add insert classes
  - ▶ Regularly started classes with 17 or fewer
  - ▶ Training washed out another 4
  - ▶ Attrition rate is 10/month
  - ▶ Could grow about 3 operators/month
  - ▶ Needed 100 for full implementation
- ▶ Have since eliminated insert classes and cut classes to 15 operators/month

# TRAINING

- ▶ Complex changes
  - ▶ Breaking up loops, splitting lines, new layovers and terminals
- ▶ Developed massive training document
- ▶ Dubious interpretation of ATU contract
  - ▶ Forced four consecutive general sign-ups
- ▶ Training on new lines for June finished in September, training for lines in March finished in June



Jordan. 🏳️‍🌈❤️💜💙  
@JordanLovesDWJ

Follow



#ACTransit 72 bus just skipped my stop.  
Could you get them to stop doing that?

10:20 AM - 3 Jun 2016

# COST FORECASTS

- ▶ Spending plan used hourly rate of \$101/hour
  - ▶ Didn't reflect actual costs of operating service
- ▶ New budget director did comprehensive analysis
  - ▶ New rate of \$155/hour
- ▶ Fifty percent of planned expansion disappeared overnight
- ▶ Re-thought Package 3 as cost-neutral
- ▶ Original plan called for total of 1,371 operators, can only afford 1,344.
- ▶ New layover requirements in CBA added 27 operators
- ▶ Must implement all improvements with 1,344



# QUALITY CONTROL

- ▶ Service Planning delivered specs to Scheduling
  - ▶ Some specs were missing key pieces of information
  - ▶ At least two lines had much higher service levels than approved by the Board
- ▶ Final information in Hastus had some trips missing or had very inaccurate run-time
- ▶ Some assignments were changed last-minute based on input from drivers and forced rushed changes that led to errors.
- ▶ Sign-up process was not formalized
  - ▶ Continually re-making the same mistakes
  - ▶ Sometimes finding new ways to mess up

# SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Back to basics
  - ▶ Develop formal sign-up SOP
  - ▶ Evaluate and update hourly rates annually
  - ▶ Build internal infrastructure in training, recruitment, scheduling, and operations
- ▶ Evaluate all existing lines and blocks to find efficiencies
  - ▶ Expand service levels without increasing buses/drivers
- ▶ Ridership on adjusted lines up three percent
  - ▶ Rest of the system down eight percent



Andi

@Andi\_Tendaji

Follow



OKAY! [#ACTransit](#) [#Route6](#) I see you...  
[#Route1R](#) was a timesaver so I was a little  
worried about this new operating system  
going on in my city

7:08 PM - 27 Jun 2016 from [Oakland, CA](#)



# NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Finish the SOP
- ▶ Implement Package 3 in March 2018 (elections in November 2018)
- ▶ Replace retiring staff
- ▶ Bring secret package to Board
- ▶ Conduct Transbay COA
  - ▶ Transbay Tomorrow
  - ▶ Coming August 2018





# WE'RE HIRING!

Assistant Planner Posting Soon

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