



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

Public Comment CTA Meeting 9-28-2021 Agenda Item Number 8

1 message

Jaime Vloria <jaimemvloria@hotmail.com>
To: "clerk@sfcta.org" <clerk@sfcta.org>

Mon, Sep 27, 2021 at 10:57 PM

To the Commissioners:

My name is Jaime Vloria and I am a community organizer and resident of District 6. I'm writing this public comment in response to SFMTA's Service Restoration plan for 2022. I think that SFMTA is forcing ridership to choose between coverage and frequency because they don't think they have enough funding to sustain pre-pandemic lines and would rather divide riders based on those two choices. Depending on what proposal SFMTA comes up with to the SFMTA Board of Directors by Dec. 7, 2021, it will leave people behind, particularly for riders who may not get their lines back to their original routes from pre-pandemic levels.

I would also like to point out the survey itself is rushed, biased to the "Frequent" network and did not have good outreach, especially to communities that do not do virtual events; communities like the residents of the Tenderloin neighborhood where there are a lot of seniors, people with mobility issues, and mono-lingual, non-English speaking residents. They did not have opportunities to learn about what the service plans were, especially how confusing and complex the proposals were in the survey. It seems like SFMTA created the survey to validate what they intend to propose because of the poor outreach, the seemingly more "pros" of the Frequent network, and rushing the process. They even defined "access" based on Jarret Walker, their consultant's definition where most riders would have not known (See: <https://humantransit.org/2021/03/basics-access-or-the-wall-around-your-life.html>). It can be misleading because based on that definition, "Frequency" will provide more access to important services as stated in the survey. Most people would think the Frequency option just provides more bus lines to more areas of the city. That is misleading when it's actually providing less lines and less access for people who will lose those lines if the Frequent option.

I ask you, the commissioners, to please press SFMTA leadership to provide a plan that values both coverage and frequency while addressing the real concerns riders have been expressing in the in the past weeks - like the riders from the J-Church lines demanding for the full route to the 21-Hayes riders who have been demanding since earlier this year. SFMTA should provide frequency AND coverage rather than forcing riders to choose between the two that can result in the continued decline in confidence on SFMTA. I ask that you also find funds to address the operational costs that prevent SFMTA from restoring the network to pre-pandemic levels

I think our transit agencies should be working to inspire us, restore our confidence and trust, and should not go the way of austerity. I ask that you as our policy makers, find a solution to this problem while not allowing SFMTA to continue to divide our ridership and continuing to erode trust. It is not a progressive policy nor does it fit our Transit First policy. We also need a more robust ridership engagement before changing/modifying lines centered on equity in access and outreach. If we don't involve the community and actually listen to the needs of people who need transit the most, it will only harm the agency in the long run. SFMTA should provide the service that San Franciscans deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jaime Vioria

District 6, SF



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

Comments about J Church for SFCTA Meeting 9/28/21

1 message

'**anastasia Yovanopoulos**' via Clerk <clerk@sfcta.org>
Reply-To: anastasia Yovanopoulos <shashacooks@yahoo.com>
To: "clerk@sfcta.org" <clerk@sfcta.org>

Mon, Sep 27, 2021 at 8:06 PM

Dear SFCTA members,

Would you please tell MTA to restore direct service on the J-Church line and end the forced transfer NOW? As a senior who lives in District #8, I care about safety and dependable MUNI service first and foremost.

It's **unfair** to make J-Church riders get off the train at Church and Market Street and interrupt their commute to transfer to get to their destination. The forced transfer and delaying the restoration of full service to the J-Church line, as it was since 1917 causes transit riders to change our travel patterns and practices, and resort to using alternate means of transportation, which **promotes climate change by increasing polluting emissions**.

It is **dangerous** for seniors, families with infants and children, those with restricted mobility, the blind, those using the aid of walkers and canes, shoppers with carts, nannies with double strollers, and children going on class trips, to have **to dodge traffic at this busy city intersection**, and it's **onerous to have to step over tracks**- to get across the street to get to an elevator, or to take the F. Market or go down 2 flights of stairs to the underground. **This scenario presents added safety risks for our city and it's residents**.

Arriving at Market Street 2 minutes faster is not a priority. 68% of respondents opposed the forced transfer according to MTA's Transfer Improvement Survey dated September 15, 2021.

Sincerely,
Anastasia Yovanopoulos
District #8 resident
J-Church Work Group member



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

Comments about J Church for SFCTA Board Meeting 9/28/21

1 message

KATHY SETIAN <ksetian@sbcglobal.net>
To: clerk@sfcta.org

Mon, Sep 27, 2021 at 9:09 AM

Dear SFCTA Board Members:

Please tell MTA that they must restore the J Church direct service to downtown and end the forced transfer.

MTA says service is better now than in 2019. Of course it is! Ridership is half what it used to be because of extensive working at home. And Work-At-Home is here to stay.

MTA is making an apples to oranges comparison: they compare current performance to performance when twice as many people were commuting, and twice as many trains were in the subway at rush hour. To establish a legitimate baseline, MTA should restore J service to downtown NOW and observe the performance.

We have been told that adding 6 J trains per hour would bring the total number of trains to **24** per hour, far below the **41** per hour pre-pandemic.

68% of respondents opposed the forced transfer according to MTA's Transfer Improvement Survey dated September 15, 2021. Here are a few quotes from community members who have recently written to MTA and the Restore the J Workgroup:

Women

"When I travel at night alone as a woman, why do I want to get off a train to stand in the dark at the stops? Please let me know how to join the cause. Thanks, your Noe neighbor and used to be avid public transit user until these changes."
Friday, September 10, 2021, 05:33:42 PM PDT

Children

"My daughter takes the J church to school every day- and home...She has to exit the train, cross the street and then go down into the underground station to get the rest of the way to school. [We] urge you to restore the J church to its former route. It's the safest way for our kids to get to school, but the above-ground transfer makes it much less safe."
Sat, Sep 25 at 6:30 PM

Mobility

"I am in full support of restoring the J Church Street car to its "FULL" route. I have taken the J downtown for over 40 years from my Noe Valley residence. I now have significant mobility issues which make getting downtown impossible due to the route changes. Please include me in your efforts."
Thursday, September 16, 2021, 07:14:44 AM PDT

Tradeoff

"MUNI staff, please stop spouting the super-hyped up "tradeoff" of saving time. 68% of respondents opposed the forced transfer according to MTA's Transfer Improvement Survey dated September 15, 2021."
Tuesday, September 21, 2021, 09:40 AM PDT

System problem

"We certainly don't want people driving or taking a car service downtown and contributing to street congestion and global warming, do we? I cannot be convinced that its [J] entry to the tunnel causes delays. And if it does, that means to me that there has not been an adequate attempt to address the ROOT problem rather than force so many riders along the line to experience a substantial degradation of service. "

Community Input

"I live at 30th and Church and attended two community meetings at the Rec Center about proposals to improve the J Church... But the idea of terminating the J at Market St. and keeping it out of the tunnel was NEVER discussed at those meetings. There would have been a ROAR of negative outcry if it had. "
Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 15:08 PM PDT

Apples & Oranges

"I understand that MUNI has conducted studies comparing travel times with and without the forced transfer, but those look

at conditions pre-pandemic versus post-pandemic. Those conditions are not comparable and the data yielded is not applicable to a decision of such magnitude."

Sep 25 at 2:21 PM

Cultural Events

"For years we have used the J Church for evening travel to and from Civic Center music venues. The current service cut requiring an outdoor wait and transfer at Church and Market in the dark and potentially bad weather is unacceptable. Continuing with this will result in our ... having to drive and bear the parking expense... This is not what a vibrant city should be doing. Restore the J Church subway service to downtown."

Sep 25 at 10:27 AM

Convenience

"Faster service is not necessarily better service. If you asked each rider whether they would prefer to stay on the same car and end up downtown a few minutes later than they would if they transferred mid-ride, I think you would find overwhelming support for the longer, but more direct route."

Teenagers

"The J forced transfer is terrible for teenagers getting to school in the morning across town who need to get to Van Ness. Not to mention there are never any seats getting on during rush hour at the transfer location."

Sunday, September 19, 2021, 11:41 AM PDT

Health

"The J was my daily commuter trolley for all my working life. ... Transferring at Market and Church is hazardous to the health and well being of those who are not completely able-bodied. Bring back our direct route to downtown San Francisco!"

Saturday, September 17, 2021, 02:07 PM PDT

Safety

"Waiting outside at Market Street for the return trip to Noe Valley in the dark is unsafe for everyone. I have personally been accosted while waiting for the J at Market Street at 8:30 p.m. Once again, SFMTA seems to ignore the safety of the citizens in its quest for "efficiency"... It would behoove the Mayor, Supervisors and SFMTA to remember who they ultimately work for."

Monday, September 20, 2021 3:01:53 PM

J Candy Cane

"I've been in this neighborhood since the 1950s, when my mother would put me and my brothers on the streetcar which we then called the "J Candy Cane" to go downtown...The restoration of direct service to downtown would today be an indispensable link to downtown for an old guy like me with bad knees ...Keep the J Candy Cane running all the way to downtown. It's needed by all of us on the line, young and old."

Sunday, September 26, 2021 08:12 PM

Thank you for your consideration,
Kathy Setian, Coordinator
Restore the J Workgroup
District 8 Homeowner



September 27, 2021

Chair Mandelman and Commissioners
San Francisco County Transportation Authority
1455 Market Street, 22nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
info@sfcta.org

Re: Item 8, 2022 Muni Service Network

Dear Chair Mandelman and Commissioners,

As the member-supported advocate for transit riders in the city, San Francisco Transit Riders has many concerns about the 2022 Muni Service Network proposals. While we're open to some alterations to the network, we continue to call for full restoration of coverage.

Given that travel patterns have changed and Muni doesn't need to serve downtown peak commutes to the extent it did before the pandemic, we think that full coverage can be restored even at 85% of pre-pandemic service hours.

We understand that SFMTA faces serious challenges and uncertainty in its financial future. In an attempt to forge a way forward, SFMTA staff are proposing a set of options that they call the familiar, the frequent, and the hybrid service plans.

We have several concerns:

- No one plan provides sufficient service.
- The outreach effort is too abbreviated and won't sufficiently capture rider input, especially among riders who can't be reached through digital means. We're finding it difficult even for the technologically privileged to participate given the tight timeline.
- Too many parts of the proposal pit riders against riders (when riders have already lived through scarcity and uncertainty throughout the pandemic).
- Going through this disruptive process now will only erode public confidence in Muni, which will make it harder to pass essential and significant funding for Muni in 2022.

Further, the survey asking for rider feedback lacks detail or a way to register nuanced reaction to any of the proposals. There are more questions about demographics than about the actual plan. Riders should be able to evaluate and respond to each service change and there should be some flexibility to mix and match route proposals.

For example, we support making the 49 Van Ness/Mission a Rapid route. The new stop spacing on Van Ness Ave is designed for that, and riders on Mission Street would benefit from added

Rapid service. Currently on Mission Street, the 14R Mission is the most often crowded and the 49 Van Ness/Mission is most often underutilized.

However, downgrading or eliminating the 21 Hayes disconnects the Hayes Valley commercial district, leaves a community of riders behind, and pits their needs against those of other riders. It takes away service entirely from some riders in order to increase frequency on other routes from 6 minutes to 5 minutes.

A "5-minute network" is an appealing concept and we understand that a minute can represent a 20% difference in capacity. However, except where pass-ups exist, the difference between 5 minutes and 6 minutes is not hugely significant to riders. A "6-minute network" should be sufficient in most places and at most times until more resources are available - especially if moving to a 5-minute network means taking service completely away from other riders.

Muni has a grid network, if imperfect, that is designed to facilitate trips with at most one transfer and is well-adapted to a post-pandemic world. As travel patterns change and fewer riders need to get downtown, we should make sure that the grid is not disrupted but is strengthened. So for example, the 21 Hayes could be interlined with the 6 Parnassus to strengthen connections and improve utility of both routes.

Following are some responses to the plan in more detail, which hopefully illuminate some of the nuance and possibility we think has been missed:

- The 2 Clement is an important secondary route that provides access, serves the Clement commercial district, and accommodates overflow from nearby busy routes. Downtown, the spacing between the 1 California and the 38 Geary is excessive especially considering the hills.
- The 21 Hayes is also an important secondary route, covering the large (and hilly) gap between Fulton and Haight. Shortening the 21 to Market Street means it won't fully connect with the rest of the system and won't be very useful. The 21 should continue downtown. As mentioned above, one option could be to interline it in the near term with the 6 Parnassus at Stanyan or Masonic, to strengthen the grid and increase connectivity.
- Eliminating the 47 Van Ness also hurts the Muni grid. It leaves Fisherman's Wharf workers behind, reduces many important connections along the Van Ness corridor, and cuts the connection from Civic Center to Caltrain. The Van Ness BRT lane is finally about to open, so let's take advantage of it rather than eliminating a route. (The proposed 31 Balboa connection to Caltrain doesn't substitute for the connectivity of the 47 Van Ness.)
- Extending the 31 Balboa down 5th Street to Caltrain might be worth considering, but would need thorough outreach with riders. That central part of SOMA lost north-south connection when the 27 Bryant was moved (due in large part to delays on 5th Street).

Do people in the area need the connection to the Tenderloin, Nob Hill, and the Mission provided by the 27, or do they need connection to Caltrain, Western Addition, and the Richmond provided by the 31? The answer might be both. However, the last time SFMTA redesigned 5th Street, it made it worse for transit. Again, this is a larger conversation that can't be adequately addressed in the current timeline.

- It is a real problem that connections and service for transit riders in the southwestern part of the city are so negatively impacted by car traffic problems at St. Francis Circle. While the intersection probably needs a full redesign, in the short term a few turn restrictions for cars could improve Muni service. Instead, staff have decided to re-route the 23 Monterey, again hurting east-west grid connections. They have also created the new 58 Lake Merced, which provides some access but doesn't connect to much. It might make more sense to interline the 23 with the 58, both restoring the grid and providing better connections particularly for the 58.

Again, everyone is pandemic-fatigued, especially riders who are still missing their service. This is the wrong time to be asking for further sacrifices from riders, and to pit riders against other riders. This is a very difficult time to do thorough outreach with riders, especially those who won't engage with online activities or posters at bus stops. Changes have been happening so quickly that everyone has had a hard time keeping up with them and knowing when and where their Muni service will be.

Perhaps most importantly, SFMTA needs to be building trust with the public in order to pass needed transit funding, not undermining it with a rushed process. We continue to call for full restoration of service to reconnect the city.

Sincerely,



Cat Carter
Policy & Communications Director
San Francisco Transit Riders

cc: Tilly Chang, Executive Director
Jeffrey Tumlin, SFMTA Director of Transportation
Julie Kirschbaum, SFMTA Director of Transit