Walnut Creek Transportation Commission
1666 N Main St.
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Honorable Members of the Transportation Commission:

Walk Bike Walnut Creek works to make walking and biking safer, easier, and more popular in Walnut Creek. There are some really good ideas in the CCTA draft Mobility Hub document and also some changes that could make the proposal stronger.

Our belief is that the choice to take transit (and to walk, bike or take the bus to transit!) is about convenience, speed, and safety, more so than it is about having "creature comforts" that were also proposed options in the CCTA survey. It is encouraging that Highwire Coffee opened a year or so ago, and also that a pizza shop opened. These businesses could use more customers that are attracted by higher ridership to the station, and their existence makes competing businesses, or features like coworking desks, less of a priority.

The highest priority for CCTA and Walnut Creek as part of the Mobility Hub should be to make it easier, safer, and faster to get from Walnut Creek BART to downtown. We are extremely encouraged by the proposal to close the slip lane in front of N. California and Ygnacio Valley Road. We encourage the City and CCTA to work together on timing the light signals at that intersection to encourage safe pedestrian and cyclist travel from the station to downtown.

We encourage CCTA to exhaust all options to implement shorter headways for the #4 and #5 buses. The proposed January 2026 timetable calls for the buses to take a shorter route through downtown. However, even with investments in transit signal priority infrastructure to hold green lights open, CCTA suggests it will take the #4 bus 25 minutes to drive to Men's Wearhouse and back to the station. At the station, the battery electric bus will then sit still for 20 minutes to recharge.

Of eight battery electric buses owned by CCTA *only three are currently functional*. The schedules for both the #4 and #5 routes are designed around the limitations of these buses, even though the battery electric buses have completed about 20% of trips since 2022, and diesel buses have completed 80% of trips.

- **Bus 1600 (Green trolley bus)** - Out of service for the last 441 days.

- **Bus 1601 (Green trolley)** - Was out of service from July 2024 to April 2025
- **Bus 1602 (Green trolley)** - Out of service from July 2024 to May 12, 2025. Went into service, then out of service May 17, 2025 and has not been back since
- **Bus 1603 (Green)** - Does not appear to have run any routes since at least March 2022 (the earliest that data is available).
- **Bus 1800 (white)** - out of service all of 2023, in service for one day in 2024 (maybe a data entry error?), out of service for almost all of 2024, spring 2025.
- **Bus 1801 (white)** - has been out of service since July 2024.
- **Bus 1802 (white)** - has been out of service since May 2022.
- **Bus 1803 (white)** - missed August 2023 to March 2024

Individually, the reliability for the battery bus fleet is between 2%-25%. *Taken together*, the fleet is at about 40% reliability - on 60% of days for the last three years, not a single battery bus has been running. You cannot plan schedules around buses that fail this often.

Our estimate is that the new #4 route with transit signal priority will take about 18 minutes on average to complete, leaving each bus (even though they are diesel buses 80% of the time) waiting at BART for 27 of every 45 minutes of proposed travel time; in other words, we're going to pay drivers to sit at BART for 60% of every shift. County Connection also builds in a long charge time because they do not want the buses to go below 70% charge level, a practice that is out of sync with recommendations from battery electric bus manufacturers. This is a waste of $600,000 per year in AHSC grant funding and deserves further exploration or explanation from CCTA.

Without spending another penny, CCTA could plan to have the #4 bus arrive every ten minutes, instead of every 15 minutes. CCTA could just run the diesel buses full time, save the battery buses for special occasions, and then run three buses on an every-ten-minute schedule. Alternatively, CCTA could run the battery electric buses for a half day, let the battery run down below 50% charge, and count on 5 minutes of charge time instead of 15 minutes.[1] If CCTA was willing to spend money, it could invest in upgraded charging equipment or battery capacity, that could let the battery electric buses complete a full day's route without needing to spend 45% of every service hour at the BART station.[2] Alternatively, CCTA could apply to

[1] While the timetable builds in 20 minutes of wait time at BART, the buses must charge wirelessly and there is only one wireless charging pad at the station. With three buses operating on a 45 minute round trip, this means each bus can charge for a maximum of 15 minutes.

[2] CCTA will likely argue that FTA rules require them to run the buses for 12 years, and CARB will not let them replace battery electric buses with diesel buses. They can ask for waivers from each rule; SFMTA just asked for waivers for San Francisco. In any event, the amount of money wasted on waiting for buses to charge, and the potential from shorter headways means at the very least they should *explore* options besides 20 minute charge times at BART.

CARB and the FTA for a waiver and retire these buses. The 2-25% availability levels are well within the range to qualify for early retirement and other agencies have successfully retired early generation battery electric buses.

Every-ten-minute service would increase the route's capacity by 50%, and likely lead to **thousands of additional riders per month**. This would also synchronize with BART's schedule (which arrives every ten minutes), which would reduce overall travel times to and from downtown. And as mentioned, *ten minute headways can be achieved for $0*. There are no other proposals under consideration as part of the Mobility Hub proposal, that would increase station activation as much as pursuing ten minute headways for the #4 bus.

Finally, a Mobility Hub can only be activated so much with fenced off parking lots in the station vicinity, instead of hundreds of apartments. The approved plans for BART Transit Village Phase 3 call for 300 additional parking spaces to be constructed. Not only does the cost of the parking make the housing less feasible, the existing South Garage parking lot is so empty that the Land Rover dealership is storing extra cars on the fourth floor.

We encourage the Walnut Creek Transportation Commission to pass a resolution, or write a letter, to CCTA asking them to explore alternatives to shorten headways on the #4 and #5 buses. We encourage the Transportation Commission to pass a resolution, or write a letter, the City Council, and to BART, asking them to formally reopen negotiation over the terms for Transit Village Phase 3.

Walk Bike Walnut Creek