



**MEMO**

TO: Kirk Duncan, Public Works Director  
City and Borough of Juneau

FROM: Irene Gallion, Office Manager  
DOWL HKM

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Irene Gallion".

DATE: December 8, 2014

SUBJECT: Comment Analysis for Capital Transit Route and Service Changes

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DOWL HKM is pleased to submit this preliminary comment analysis to the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ). This memo summarizes the comments received and forwarded to me by CBJ staff through Sunday, December 7, 2014, at 9:00 am.

Comment evaluation is a qualitative endeavor. Because of the short time frame and intensity of comment submission, this analysis has not gone through the quality control reviews it usually would. However, it can provide a solid starting point for you and the Assembly to understand general trends.

**Comments and Outreach:**

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156 separate submissions were made, with comments on 464 issues.

**Table 1: Comment Delivery Methods**

Source	Number
E mail to city	84
586-BUS1	13
Downtown Library Meeting, December 1, 12:00 pm	12
Downtown Library Meeting, December 1, 4:45 pm	11
Valley Library Meeting, December 2, 6:30 pm	10
Douglas Library Meeting, December 3, 6:30 pm	7
Dzantik'l Heeni Middle School Meeting, December 6, 1:30 pm	6
Valley Library Meeting, December 3, 12:00 pm	4
juneautransitplan.org comment	2
Letter	2
Tell it to City Hall	2
UAS Meeting, December 3, 12:00 pm	2
Call directly to city manager	1
TOTAL	156

While there were 51 anonymous comments, only three people were documented submitting comments more than once.

CBJ staff counted 151 people signing in for public meetings:

December 1, Noon, Downtown Library .....	14
December 1, 4:45 pm, Downtown Library .....	17
December 2, 6:30 pm, Valley Library .....	15
December 3, UAS, Noon.....	68
December 3, 6:30 pm, Douglas Library .....	14
December 4, Noon, Valley Library .....	10
December 6, 1:30 pm, DZ Middle School.....	13

CBJ staff noted that the UAS meeting attendance was closer to 80, and that many people did not sign in.

**Comment Analysis:**

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The table below summarizes the comments received for each topic:

**Table 2: Comments received, by topic.**

Topic	Total	Negative	Neutral	Positive
UAS service reduction	69	63	5	1
General	66	22	43	1
General change	59	44	10	5
DT service reduction	53	44	9	
Skate park transfer	49	43	5	1
Context	24	15	8	1
Mendenhall service cut	22	19	3	
Nugget Mall service cut	23	22		1
Express/Commuter	21	14	3	4
Riverside expanded service	18	7	3	8
Budget	14	6	8	
Douglas transfer	12	11	1	
St. Ann's service reduction	11	9		2
Transit center transfers	11	7	3	1
Back Loop	6	3	1	2
Capacity	3	2	1	
Expanded hours	3			3
TOTALS all comments	464	331	103	30

**UAS service reduction:** These are comments on busses no longer entering the UAS campus.

**General:** These are comments that are not specific to the changes proposed, but instead apply to Capital City Transit in general, or to routes not under discussion. Examples include comments on timeliness, winter conditions, or sustainability.

**General change:** These are comments that apply in general to the changes being proposed. An example is a comment that indicates the commenter would prefer that scheduling remain the same.

**Downtown service reduction:** These are comments addressing busses no longer traveling the downtown loop of Franklin, Fourth and Main Streets.

**Skate park transfer:** These comments address shifting the valley transfer point from the Nugget Mall to the Pipeline Skate Park.

**Context:** These comments concern the environment that decisions were made in. These include issues such as out-of-town consultants, and city leadership that does not ride the bus.

**Mendenhall service cut:** These comments address elimination of service on Mendenhall Loop Road between Stephen Richards and Mendenhall Mall Road.

**Nugget Mall service cut:** These are comments specifically on service to the mall. Note that comments regarding the mall's suitability as a transfer point are categorized under "Skate park transfer."

**Express/Commuter:** These comments address changes to express or commuter bus routing.

**Riverside expanded service:** These comments address augmented service on Riverside Drive.

**Budget:** These comments specifically address the budgetary concerns prompting service change.

**Douglas transfer:** These comments address concerns regarding the transfer time between this route and valley routes – as much as 20 minutes in some cases.

**St. Ann's service reduction:** These comments address elimination of Douglas service beyond the Post Office.

**Transit center transfers:** These comments address shifting the downtown transfer point from the Federal Building to the downtown transit center.

**Back Loop:** These comments regard possible impacts changes might make to service on Back Loop Road.

**Capacity:** These comments address how many people are taking advantage of transit services.

**Expanded hours:** These comments address earlier service start, and increased evening frequency.

As I reviewed elements, there were a number of secondary themes that arose. Analysis for secondary themes was not as regimented as for primary themes, and not all comments had secondary themes. Further analysis would further clarify commenter intentions. With that caveat, secondary themes are shown below in Table 3.

**Table 3: Secondary themes in comment elements.**

Secondary Themes	# of comments
Ideas	71
ADA/Social Justice	33
Winter operations	16
Safety	7
Sustainability	4
School service	3

**Observations:**

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The degree of public interest is significant, compared with recent public outreach I've been involved in. Our meetings for the Juneau Utility Rate Study attracted 37 attendees, and two written comments were submitted at those meetings. The number of comments received for this project is more than three times that received for initial scoping on Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Commercial Activity Allocation. The Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan received 118 public comments in Phase I. It is interesting that a regional transportation plan had 38 fewer comments than this proposal.

Only two written comments were received at the UAS meeting, but the largest number of comments were made on that topic. Many of those comments were from parents or staff. The most effective student outreach seemed to be through Glenn Wright's UAS government class, where their survey reached 151 respondents. This has interesting implications for future public outreach to university students.

There were a number of references to a "Park and Ride" system, with parking available at the Nugget Mall. It is important to note that there is no formal Park and Ride agreement with either mall. If an informal Park and Ride system is in place, it is by the good graces or the nescience of mall management.

CBJ staff provided wonderful support in this analysis. If a comment had challenging penmanship or sentence structure, they took the time to translate, and sometimes provided a briefing on the intent of the commenter.

**Process:**

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I received comments electronically through CBJ staff. I did not edit to improve language, grammar or readability. Some hand-written comments were transcribed by CBJ staff who were present with the

commenter, and could discuss their comments with them. When applicable (such as when limitations compromised the commenter's ability to write clearly), CBJ staff included notes on the intent of the commenter.

Each comment submission was logged as it came in and given a letter code (A, AB, AC, etc.) One comment could address multiple elements. For instance, one commenter might comment on reductions in downtown service and on the relocation of the valley transfer station to the skate park. The letter code follows these elements (under the "C#" column in the analysis), so that readers can trace the categorized comment back to the original submission to understand context. A scanned document includes original comments with a hand-written C# next to each comment.

For the rest of this discussion, an "element" refers to a salient idea categorized separately from the rest of the comment submission. Each element was categorized into the topics in Table 2 above. As I reviewed the comments, subordinate themes seemed to arise, and those are categorized under "Secondary" in the comment analysis. Each element was evaluated to determine if it was:

Negative: This includes opposition to the suggested change.

Neutral: These tended not to support or oppose a proposed change, but instead provide ideas on different ways to address the issue.

Positive: These include those who support a suggested change.

On Sunday, December 7, 2014, elements were broken into areas of primary concern and analyzed. Summary documents were presented to you on December 8, 2014 at an 8:30 am meeting, and final documents submitted electronically at noon on that day.

Attachments:

Consolidated Comments, 12/7/14

Comments, as received 12/7/14

Comments received after 9:00 am on December 7, 2014

Diane Cathcart

Sarah Schaefer

Susi Fowler

Paul Khera

## Gallion, Irene

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**From:** Kirk Duncan <Kirk.Duncan@juneau.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 08, 2014 8:12 AM  
**To:** Diane Cathcart  
**Cc:** Gallion, Irene  
**Subject:** RE: Capital Transit Proposed Changes

Di – Thanks for your comments and they will be included in the Assembly packet  
Kirk

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**From:** Diane Cathcart  
**Sent:** Monday, December 08, 2014 4:36 AM  
**To:** Borough Assembly  
**Cc:** Kirk Duncan; Capital Transit  
**Subject:** Capital Transit Proposed Changes

Hello,

First I must apologize for using my work email, since I am speaking personally, however I am south caring for my mother right now and for some reason I can not log into my personal yahoo account - stress seems to have pushed the password from my mind. I have been chewing on these proposed changes since I first heard of them and while most of the time I bite my tongue on the decisions I see made at CBJ by Dept Heads and the Assembly, this one just irks my noodle too much to let it pass.

While I think it's great that CBJ is finally looking at adding a route along part of Riverside, I think the rest of the changes are horrible. Why in this age of trying to encourage mass transit use everywhere else in the country Juneau feels it needs to go backwards and diminish mass transit is yet another example of the bizarre choices I watch CBJ make everyday.

To remove the transit center from Nugget Mall, an extremely high use area for transit users, and where St. Vincent's is in the stages of building more housing for seniors and low-income, and moving it to an area that has nothing (the skate park), no food services, etc, in fact it was stated money would have to be spent to bring that new transit stop up to par to be able to "hold" the buses is unbelievable. You would spend money to bring a parking lot up to par but you would not spend money to increase bus service areas.

There are plenty of people who have already spoken about the utter ridiculousness of not going into UAS so I will just second everything already said about that. The same for eliminating bus service to the core of downtown, I'm sorry but if we can still allow the tour buses belching diesel to go up and around to 4th street and down, Capital Transit buses or a smaller shuttle type should be able to as well.

Ridership is high in the morning going down Riverside, however I find it hard to believe that it would see an increased use during the day when kids should be in school, the pool is closed to the public on Mondays, and the library is not completed. Plus the bus would no longer go past two trailer parks (Kodzoff) and the suburban area around Nancy St. Having grown up in Kodzoff we rode the bus every day because my mother never owned a car.

Please, with all the money that gets spent on surveys, and studies, including this one with Nygard that we keep throwing money at, instead of throwing money directly at the bus service. Please just stop and think for

a minute of what we want our Capital City to look like. We can't talk about wanting to increase affordable housing in places, and create jobs when with the other hand we make it more difficult for people to achieve that.

This is the 21st century and there are incredible strides other cities are making with mass transit, because their local governments are investing in that future. Just one example is, outside of Denver one of the bus lines is running for free for the year in order to increase ridership in that area again and get people to realize that mass transit is a great option.

I have heard the arguments and reasons for the proposed changes and they are weak. Not only that, but when you have fellow employees saying this is a bad idea, yet they are treated like they are "just complainers" it is extremely disrespectful to those employees who work hard everyday and drive and care for the lives of passengers in horrible driving conditions, long hours, and short bathroom breaks, not many of us could do that. It is not only Police and Fire that come to the aid of Juneau citizens, it is the bus drivers that take so many of us to and from our daily activities, and almost always have a kind word to say or a smile. I'm afraid I can't say the same for all of us, Assembly and myself included.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts, I love CBJ, that's why I live and work here, I fully understand the hard choices that need to be made everyday, but we also have the ability to make good choices everyday and think of the needs of our fellow citizens who do not have the luxury of having a vehicle, who have to walk many blocks through nasty weather with groceries, small children, or elderly knees.

Please find a way to use some of this money we throw at studies and start using it for actually making changes for the better to our beautiful Capital City.

Thank you,  
Diane Cathcart  
Bus rider since 1979

## Gallion, Irene

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**From:** Sarah K Schaefer <skschaefer@uas.alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 07, 2014 11:21 PM  
**To:** Capital Transit  
**Subject:** comment on capital transit plan

To Whom It May Concern:

My colleague's excellent comments (see email below) regarding the proposed changes to the capital transit plan are shared by a large majority of the UAS community.

As a resident of downtown Douglas in a single car household, I take the UAS Express Bus to work - the UAS Auke Lake Campus - almost every day. It is quick, convenient, affordable, and environmentally responsible.

The biggest impact for me and so many of my colleagues that the elimination of the express route to UAS would have, is the complete loss of that convenience.

With of the proposed changes, I will have two poor options for my evening commute home: I can either choose to spend an additional 11 minutes to go all away around back loop, or catch the bus in the direction I came and transfer at the skate park (a transfer that is unreliable) All in all, instead of the current 26 minute commute, it will take me 44 minutes, not counting a 1/3 mile walk (5 minutes) each way. With this new schedule, I must commute an extra 28 minutes per day, 140 minutes per week, and 560 minutes per month. This complete loss of convenience will virtually ensure I no longer take the bus to work.

It is sad and I certainly hope that adequate funding can be provided to ensure that one of the greatest public institutions in Juneau, Capital Transit, can remain its current great level of services.

Sincerely,

Sarah Schaefer  
Advising Coordinator  
School of Management  
University of Alaska southeast

907-796-6080  
[skschaefer@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:skschaefer@uas.alaska.edu)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Brian P Vander Naald <[bpvandernaald@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:bpvandernaald@uas.alaska.edu)>  
**Date:** December 5, 2014 at 4:47:10 PM AKST  
**To:** "[Capital.Transit@Juneau.org](mailto:Capital.Transit@Juneau.org)" <[Capital.Transit@Juneau.org](mailto:Capital.Transit@Juneau.org)>  
**Subject:** comment on capital transit plan

Hello,



I attended the Wednesday, 3 December capital transit meeting at UAS run by Kirk Duncan. I applaud Mr. Duncan's facilitation of the meeting and would like to simultaneously express my concern regarding the most recent proposed Capital Transit Plan. I would like to preface my comments by noting that I live downtown, work at UAS, and am a frequent express route rider. I am specifically concerned about the following pieces of the plan:

1) **Elimination of express route.** The elimination (or as you may refer to it, the restructuring) of the express route concerns me. I suspect you may respond by saying that it is still an "express" route. I would respond to that by saying that simply naming something express does not make it express. It appears as though under the new plan riding the "express" bus from UAS to downtown would require one to stay aboard for at least an additional ten minutes, which is 33% longer the current express route trip from UAS to downtown. A 33% longer bus ride will make me more than 33% less likely to ride the bus to and from work. The logical conclusion is that I am also much more likely to drive, which is in direct violation of one of Capital Transit's objectives: "to reduce the presence of automobiles in the community and especially in the Downtown".

2) **Elimination of UAS library bus stop and elimination of the downtown route.** The elimination of the UAS library bus stop and downtown loop are both moderate annoyances to someone like myself who is young and ambulatory. However, for folks who are disabled or injured it could be a real problem. The condition of the 1/3 mile path from the Back Loop bus stop to the UAS campus is somewhere between bad and terrible for at least half the year. Motoring a wheel chair, walker, or other assistive device down that path isn't pleasant or safe. My concern about eliminating the downtown loop arises for similar reasons, except the downtown section has the added problem of being on an extremely steep hill. Even those who are young and ambulatory have trouble in winter months when everything is a sheet of ice.

3) **A rigid notion of revenue raising.** Mr. Duncan noted there were 1.2 million riders last year and that this year there is a projected \$100K budget shortfall. Assuming constant ridership this year, that means a 12 cent fare increase would cover the budget shortfall. While I understand folks would get very confused if their fare changed every year due to budget shortfalls, my point is that nobody is talking about raising fares as part of a multi-faceted approach to cover the budget shortfall. The only source of additional revenue I've heard considered is from the city council. Mr. Duncan noted that fares are "at their max" according to your consultants and based on lower 48 fares. We don't live in the lower 48; everything is more expensive here, which is part of the reason you've got a \$100K budget shortfall. Additionally, you'll have a hard time convincing anyone with a rudimentary understanding of economics that fares are "at their max" without explanation behind how you reached that conclusion. Why not consider a fare increase? Unfair? Okay, then make the fares contingent upon income so it doesn't harm lower income folks. I am fortunate to be affluent relative to the average Capital Transit bus rider. I would be happy to pay 25 or even 50 cents more per ride because it's still cheaper than driving and it's much more convenient. You could then turn around and subsidize folks who don't have as much money so they don't bear the entire burden of a fare increase. I'm not saying that increasing fares is a panacea, but it should at least be considered.

4) **The Riverside Drive expansion.** Mr. Duncan noted that there were there no projected ridership numbers for a Riverside Drive addition and, further, it's proposed addition was based on "anecdotal evidence". I have a difficult time swallowing the idea that cutting something with proven demand (e.g., express route, UAS bus stop, the downtown route) in favor of adding something based on anecdotal evidence is good policy. I know there are quite a few new buildings going up on Riverside Drive. Did anyone consider the new 100 bed residence hall on

the UAS campus (which, incidentally, is nearly at capacity already)? Did anyone consider how many folks use UAS as a park and ride location?

I respectfully submit my comments and request that they be considered.

Sincerely,

Brian Vander Naald  
Assistant Professor of Economics  
Department of Social Sciences  
University of Alaska Southeast  
907-796-6071  
[bpvandernaald@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:bpvandernaald@uas.alaska.edu)

## Gallion, Irene

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**From:** Susi Gregg Fowler <fowler.susig@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 07, 2014 8:59 PM  
**To:** Capital Transit  
**Subject:** Bus Schedule Changes

I am concerned about the proposed changes to the bus schedule. I am a frequent--almost daily--bus rider, but the proposed changes will not make a huge difference for me. the route i ride daily will change little. Doing away with express bus service to nugget mall will be inconvenient for me, especially in snowy weather, as i take that bus i take for a once or twice a month appointment in the valley, but i have other options. i'm one of the lucky ones. Most people have fewer options.

i am most concerned about people with wheelchairs or folding walkers, strollers and small children. They have shops, coffee places, etc., to visit once they arrive at nugget. What is there for them at the skateboard park stop--again, especially in inclement weather? How does someone with a walker get somewhere? I've heard people talk about elderly relatives liking to walk to st. vincent's from the mall in good weather. i'm worried about making things harder for the more vulnerable among us.

students, too, at uas seem a very important constituency. being able to get between the university itself and town seems important for full-time students, part-time students, attendees of special programs at uas, and students getting to and from the jobs that help them afford to stay in school.

i have been so proud of our bus system, the courtesy and professionalism of our drivers, and how remarkably they maintain schedules even in heavy snow conditions. the system serves a great many people, keeps more cars off the road, reduces parking congestion downtown, and helps those in need. it seems to be a poor place to start cutting. i am a rider who does have other options, but most of those I ride with do not. i speak here for them and ask that decisions include an awareness of their needs.

Thank you.

Susi Gregg Fowler  
603 West 12th Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

[www.susigreggfowler.com](http://www.susigreggfowler.com)

## Gallion, Irene

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**From:** Paul Khera <paulkhera@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 07, 2014 7:45 PM  
**To:** Capital Transit  
**Subject:** Cutting Bus Service

Dear Mr. Duncan,

At a time when we are asking residents of the Valley not to heat their homes due to an air emergency, we are making them take their cars. Cars are a major contributor to Juneau's dirty air and to take away public transportation runs contrary to the requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1970. The Capital of Alaska needs to do better and needs to set the example. We need to make our public transportation system second to none and offer free bus fare during any air emergency.

Your February 2014 Transit Development Plan laid out several funding sources that should be reconsidered, namely a marine tax and a visitor tax. Other cities, such as Anchorage, have done this to pay for convention centers. While the convention centers were not needed, the tax did not hurt their tourism. Your Transit Development Plan also proposed a tax for people who own and drive cars. Since cars are a primary polluter and also require many, many CBJ resources, why not ask them to pay for the buses. Nobody wants underinsured and unsafe cars on our streets so lets give the economically disadvantaged and our elderly citizens an alternative to the automobile.

Sincerely,

Paul Khera

An automobile owner and user who has never taken the bus