County Connection

Agenda Item #7

To: Advisory Committee **Date:** September 25, 2026

From: Andrew M. Smith, Director of Planning and Marketing **Reviewed by:** RH

SUBJECT: Alternative Service Plan

Background:
Earlier this year, the Board adopted an Alternative Service Plan that identified potential reductions in service necessary to bridge the gap between revenue and expenses should the Regional Transit Measure (RTM) fail at the ballot box in November. The adoption of this plan also provided board members and staff with objective and factual information which they could speak to in their official capacities.

Alternative Service Plan:
The Board considered three different scenarios for the Alternative Service Plan, ultimately adopting Scenario 3. The memos for both board meetings are included as Attachments 1 and 2, providing background information, descriptions, and analysis of all three scenarios. Should the RTM fail to pass on the upcoming November ballot, staff will begin work creating a detailed service reduction plan based upon the adopted Alternative Service Plan. This will likely take about a year to complete and will include extensive outreach, including consultation with the Advisory Committee.

Financial Implications:
None, for information only.

Recommendation:
None, for information only.

Action Requested:
None, for information only.

Attachments:
Attachment 1: March 19, 2026 Board Memo - Draft Alternative Service Plan
Attachment 2: April 16, 2026 Board Memo – Revised Draft Alternative Service Plan

County Connection

Agenda Item # 9.a.

To: Board of Directors **Date:** March 11, 2026

From: Andrew M. Smith, Director of Planning & Marketing **Reviewed by:** RF

SUBJECT: Draft Alternative Service Plan

Background:
County Connection's operating budget is currently in a deficit position, with ongoing expenses exceeding available revenues. The reason for this structural imbalance is simply that expense growth is outpacing revenue growth. County Connection is heavily dependent on sales tax revenue, which has not kept up with inflation, and is currently relying on reserves to balance its budget. COVID funding and a 15% service reduction in 2020 have allowed County Connection to build a larger than normal reserve, delaying fiscal uncertainties. However, if no new funding is identified this reserve will only last through Fiscal Year (FY) 2028, after which it will fall below the Board policy of keeping 25% of operating expenses in reserves. This memo provides options for an Alternative Service Plan should Bay Area voters not approve the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative in November.

Alternative Service Plan:
Based on County Connection's Five Year Financial Forecast, it will be necessary to implement an approximately $6.5 million reduction in the Authority's annual operating budget by the start of FY 2029. Accordingly, staff has prepared the following two scenarios for reducing fixed route and paratransit service to achieve this budget goal. Each scenario specifies fixed routes where service will be reduced or discontinued entirely, and it is assumed that paratransit service will be discontinued in areas no longer located within 1½ miles of a fixed route.

<u>Scenario 1 - Eliminate Lower Productivity Routes (end school service)</u>
This scenario discontinues service on the 600-series school routes, and ten local and express routes with lower rates of productivity (passengers per revenue hour). While the 600-series routes have the highest rates of productivity due to the unique nature of the service, it is not possible to do an "apples-to-apples" comparison with other routes because their unique schedules (generally one run during the AM peak and one run mid-afternoon, with early releases on Wednesdays) make them more costly to operate. Because the morning runs coincide with the AM peak, County Connection must maintain a larger bus fleet and staff of bus operators, even though the 600-series routes only run once or twice a day. Additionally, the staff and fleet resources necessary for their continued operation are left idle during the summer break, school holidays, teacher in-service days, and following early school releases on most Wednesdays. The routes affected under this scenario are listed in descending order of productivity in Attachment 1 and shown on the map contained in Attachment 2.

Scenario 2 - Eliminate Lowest Productivity Routes and Reduce Frequency Elsewhere (keep school service)
This scenario maintains the 600-series school routes, discontinues service on seven local and express routes with low rates of productivity (below seven passengers per revenue hour), and reduces the frequency of 13 local and express routes with the next lowest rates of productivity (down to every 30 minutes for routes which currently operate more than one bus every 30 minutes, down to every 60 minutes for routes which currently operate more than one bus every 60 minutes, and no change to routes which currently operate less than one bus every 60 minutes). The routes affected under this scenario are listed in descending order of productivity in Attachment 1 and shown on the map contained in Attachment 3.

Notably, Routes 96X, 98X, and 99X remain unaltered in both scenarios as they can be operated using Measure J funding that is restricted to express bus service (and therefore cannot be used for other purposes), and these three routes maintain the core of County Connection's existing network of express service while eliminating overlapping routes and maximizing productivity. Similarly, weekday service on Route 4 remains unchanged because County Connection receives significant outside funding for maintaining 15-minute headways on that route.

While every route serves a vital need for those who ride it (72% of County Connection passengers are transit dependent), the cost of operating a bus in revenue service is generally the same regardless of the route or number of passengers on board (with the notable exception of school service as discussed above). Therefore, the same reduction in service between two different routes can have a drastically different impact on the number of affected passengers while producing the same amount of cost savings. Both the scenarios presented above focus their cuts and reductions in service to lower-performing routes (the routes with the lowest number of passengers per revenue hour) in order to minimize the impact for the greatest number of passengers.

Operating & Scheduling Committee Feedback:
The Operating & Scheduling Committee considered the two Scenarios at their March 6, 2026 meeting. Staff explained how this is the first step in adopting an Alternative Service Plan and that they would return in April with a revised scenario or scenarios based upon the direction provided by the Committee and the Board of Directors. After considering the various tradeoffs of each, the Committee expressed a preference for Scenario 2 because it spread the proposed cuts and reductions more equitably across the geography of County Connection's service area. They also specifically noted how Scenario 2 would maintain a greater level of service to the San Ramon Valley area than Scenario 1.

BART's Alternative Service Plan:
On February 26, 2026, the BART Board of Directors adopted its own Alternative Service Plan. The plan's first phase, which would begin in January 2027, would reduce train frequencies to every 30 minutes (currently every 10 minutes on weekdays and every 20 minutes on weekends on the Yellow Line, and every 20 minutes on the Blue Line), end service after 9pm, and increase fares by 30%. The second phase, which would begin in July 2027, would close up to 15 stations and/or up to 25% of system track miles. A potential third phase, which would only come into use if BART found itself unable to safely or legally operate with available resources, would end all service and use available tax revenues to secure systems assets and other ongoing obligations. This would have a dramatic impact on County Connection's passengers, 34% of whom transfer to/from BART, and may also necessitate changes to County

Connection's route structure as all but one of County Connection's non-school routes serve at least one BART station.

Financial Implications:
Either of the two scenarios presented above are expected to close anticipated budget gap should the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative fail at the ballot box in November.

Recommendation:
The Operating & Scheduling Committee and staff recommend the Board provide input and feedback on the two scenarios. Based on this feedback, staff will prepare the Final Alternative Service Plan for Board adoption at the April 2026 meeting.

Action Requested:
Provide direction to staff on the scenarios presented in the Draft Alternative Service Plan.

Attachments:
Attachment 1: Scenarios 1 & 2 by route (listed in descending order of productivity)
Attachment 2: Map of Scenario 1
Attachment 3: Map of Scenario 2

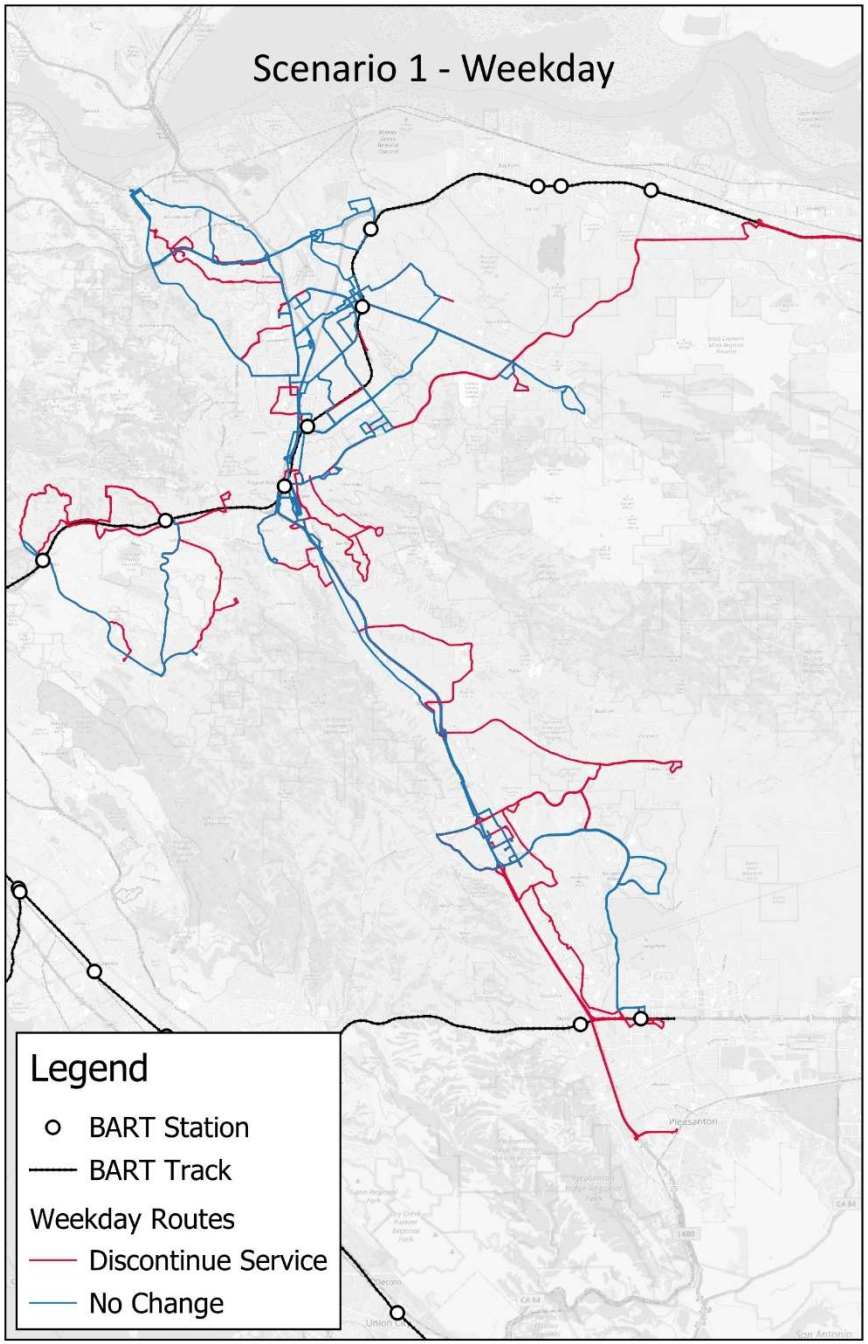
Scenarios 1 & 2 by route (listed in descending order of productivity)

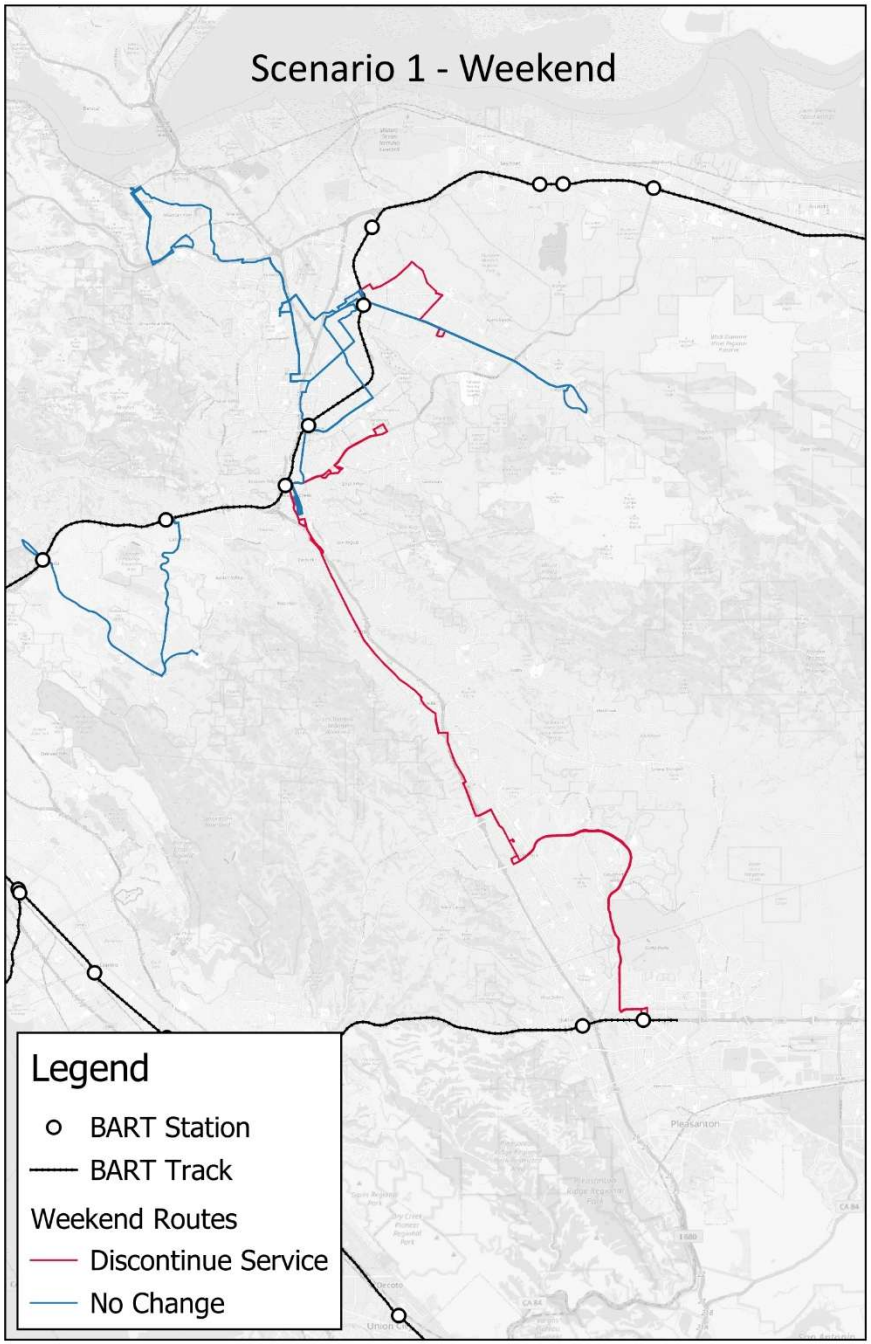
Route	Location	Productivity (pass/rev hr)	Existing Service	Scenario #1	Scenario #2	Service Period	Subarea
314	Concord BART/ Downtown Pleasant Hill / DVC	20+	30	30	30	Weekends	Central
14	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART / Walnut Creek BART	20+	30	30	30	Weekdays	Central
11	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART	20+	45-90	45-90	45-90	Weekdays	Central
10	Concord BART / Clayton	10-20	15-30	15-30	30	Weekdays	Central
4 (wkdy)	Walnut Creek BART / Broadway Plaza	10-20	15	15	15	Weekdays	Central
4 (wknd)	Walnut Creek BART / Broadway Plaza	10-20	20	20	30	Weekends	Central
20	Concord BART / DVC	10-20	15-30	15-30	30	Weekdays	Central
311	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART / Walnut Creek BART	10-20	60	60	60	Weekends	Central
16	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill / Martinez Amtrak	10-20	40	40	60	Weekdays	Central
310	Concord BART / Clayton	10-20	40	40	60	Weekends	Central
5	Walnut Creek BART / Creekside	10-20	45	45	60	Weekdays	Central
7	Pleasant Hill BART / Mitchell Park 'n Ride	10-20	20	20	30	Peak only	Central
316	Pleasant Hill BART / Martinez Amtrak	10-20	80	80	80	Weekends	Central
17	Concord BART / North Concord/Martinez BART	10-20	50	50	60	Weekdays	Central
91X	Concord Commuter Express	10-20	30	30	30	Peak only	Central
9	Walnut Creek BART / DVC	10-20	60	60	60	Weekdays	Central
320	Concord BART / DVC	10-20	40	40	60	Weekends	Central
35	San Ramon Transit Center / Dublin/Pleasanton BART	10-20	30-60	30-60	60	Weekdays	SRV
6 (wknd)	Orinda BART / Moraga / Lafayette BART	10-20	80	80	80	Weekends	Lamorinda
15	Concord BART / Pleasant Hill BART	10-20	60	60	60	Weekdays	Central
98X	Walnut Creek BART / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	40-60	40-60	40-60	Weekdays	Central
1	Rossmoor Shopping Center / Mitchell Park 'n Ride	0-10	60	60	60	Weekdays	Central
21	BART Walnut Creek / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	30-60	30-60	60	Weekdays	SRV
6 (wkdy)	Orinda BART / Moraga / Lafayette BART	0-10	30-60	30-60	60	Weekdays	Lamorinda
19	Concord BART / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	90	90	90	Weekdays	Central
321	BART Walnut Creek / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	60	X	60	Weekends	SRV
99X	North Concord/Martinez BART / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	30	30	30	Peak only	Central
335	San Ramon Transit Center / Dublin/Pleasanton BART	0-10	40	X	60	Weekends	SRV
18	Pleasant Hill BART / DVC / Martinez Amtrak	0-10	80	X	80	Weekdays	Central
28	Martinez Amtrak / DVC / Concord BART	0-10	50	X	X	Weekdays	Central
96X	Walnut Creek BART / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	30	30	30	Peak only	SRV
93X	Antioch BART / Walnut Creek BART	0-10	20-60	X	X	Peak only	Central
95X	Walnut Creek BART / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	30	X	X	Peak only	SRV
97X	Dublin/Pleasanton BART / San Ramon Transit Center	0-10	60	X	X	Peak only	SRV
315	Concord BART / Bel Air Drive	0-10	60	X	X	Weekends	Central
301	Walnut Creek BART / Shadelands	0-10	60	X	X	Weekends	Central
92X	Pleasanton ACE / Mitchell Park 'n Ride	0-10	60	X	X	Peak only	SRV
600s	School Service	n/a	1-2/day	X	1-2/day	School Days	All

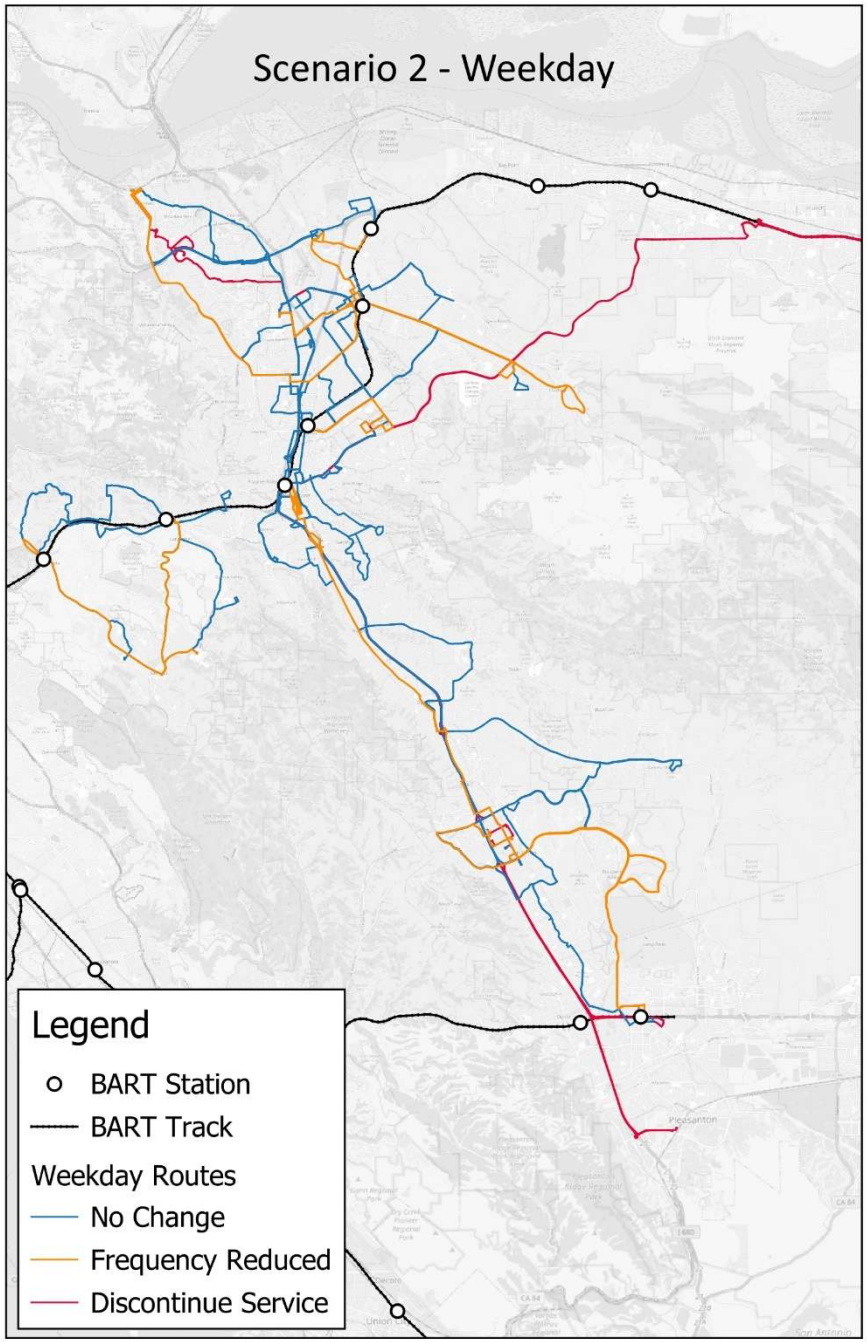
Time (in minutes) between buses: 30

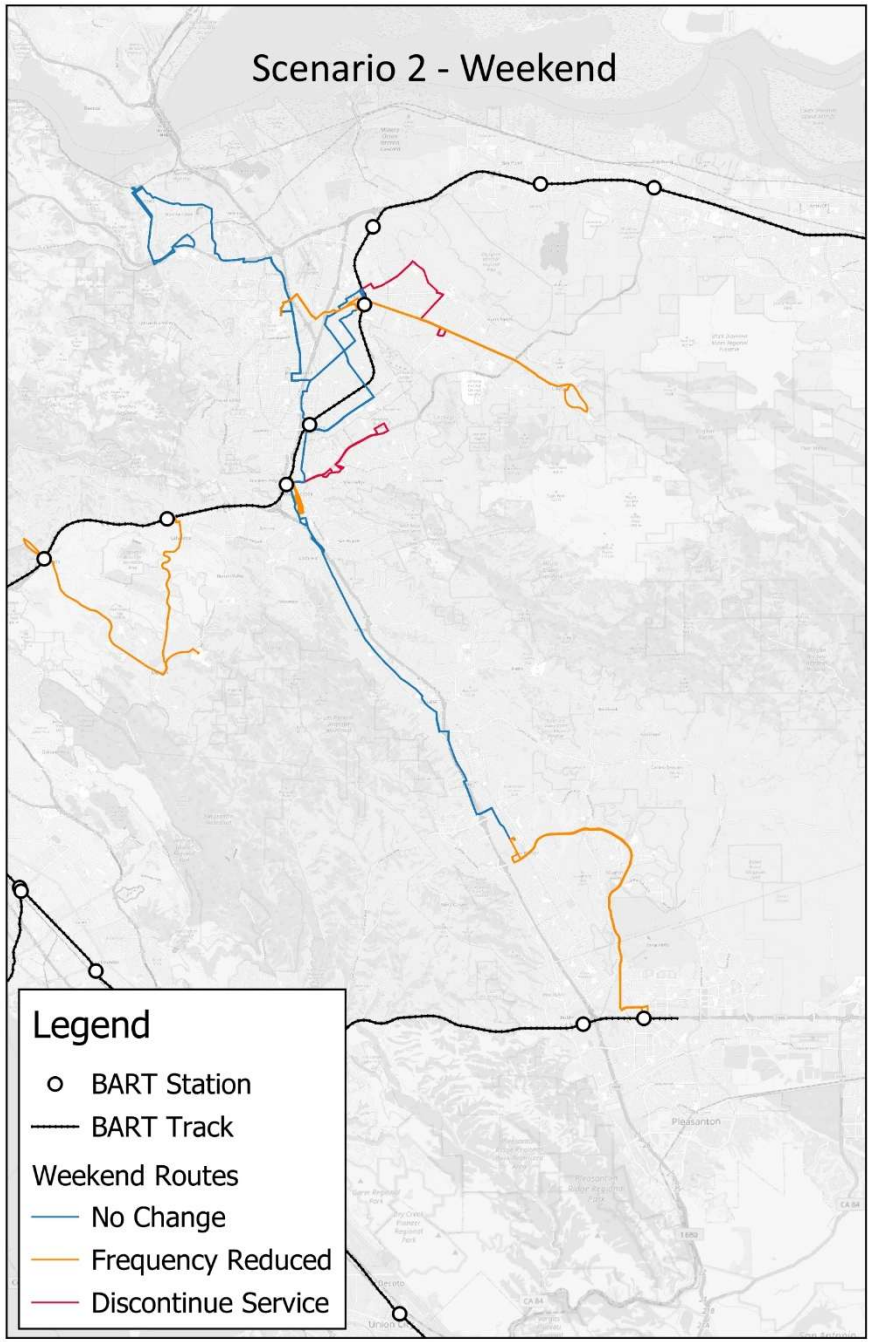
Frequency reduced: 60

Service discontinued: X


Scenario 1 - Weekday
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekday Routes
Discontinue Service
No Change


Scenario 1 - Weekend
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekend Routes
Discontinue Service
No Change


Scenario 2 - Weekday
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekday Routes
No Change
Frequency Reduced
Discontinue Service


Scenario 2 - Weekend
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekend Routes
No Change
Frequency Reduced
Discontinue Service

County Connection

Agenda Item # 9.a.

To: Board of Directors **Date:** April 9, 2026

From: Andrew M. Smith, Director of Planning & Marketing **Reviewed by:** RH

SUBJECT: Revised Draft Alternative Service Plan

Background:
At the March 2026 Board of Directors and Operations & Scheduling Committee meetings, staff presented two scenarios for an Alternative Service Plan to address the budget reductions necessary should Bay Area voters not approve the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative in November. The two scenarios varied in that Scenario 1 relied on cutting County Connection's lower productivity routes (as measured by passengers per revenue hour), while Scenario 2 took a more balanced approach of cutting only the very least productive routes and reducing frequency on the remaining routes in ascending order of productivity. Both the Board and the Committee expressed a preference for the approach taken in Scenario 2, as well as keeping all of County Connection's 600-series school routes.

Alternative Service Plan Scenarios:
Based on input provided by the Board and Committee, staff has created a new Scenario 3, which is a variant of the previously reviewed Scenario 2. This new scenario includes all of the service cuts and frequency reductions included in Scenario 2, except that it also proposes to end service on the weekday Route 18 (a lower-ridership route that runs between the Pleasant Hill BART and Martinez Amtrak stations), in order to preserve the existing frequency/headways on the weekday Route 10 (County Connection's second-highest ridership route, travelling east on Clayton Road from the Concord BART station), the weekend Route 4 (the downtown Walnut Creek "trolley", County Connection's second-most productive weekend route), and the afternoon portion of the weekday Route 20 (County Connection's third-highest ridership route, connecting the Concord BART station with DVC). Both scenarios preserve all of County Connection's 600-series school routes, and both propose to discontinue paratransit service for trips beginning or ending more than the federally mandated three-quarter-mile buffer from any fixed route.

In addition to the service reductions included in the two scenarios described above, staff would also recommend the Board's adoption of austerity measures should the Connect Bay Area initiative fail at the ballot box. These measures include reductions of approximately $170,000 in marketing expenses and $130,000 in conferences and travel, as well as an estimated $300,000 in savings from temporarily suspending MERIT and step increases and cost-of-living adjustments for administrative staff, for a combined total of approximately $600,000 annually. While these actions provide meaningful near-term savings and help to limit the depth of service reductions, staff notes that the suspension of salary increases is not a sustainable long-term strategy and should be viewed as a temporary measure rather than a recurring source of ongoing savings.

Fare Increase Option:
Staff also evaluated the possibility of filling the anticipated budget gap by raising fares. Using data from several studies on price elasticity for transit fares, staff found that this is not a viable option because the resulting reduction in ridership outpaces the increase in fare revenue. Simply stated, there would be fewer people riding the bus to pay the higher fare. Using the most conservative estimates (i.e. assuming the lowest levels of price sensitivity), County Connection could fill approximately 22% of the anticipated budget gap through a 120% fare increase ($5.50 adult cash fare, $11.00 paratransit fare) that would result in a one-third reduction in fixed-route ridership and a two-thirds reduction in paratransit ridership. Any further fare increases would result in lower overall fare revenues due to reduced ridership.

Financial Implications:
Either of the two scenarios presented above are expected to close anticipated budget gap should the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative fail at the ballot box in November.

Recommendation:
Between the two scenarios, the Operations & Scheduling Committee and staff recommend Scenario 3, as it preserves existing levels of service on more of County Connection's highest-ridership routes, while still maintaining regional connectivity (most notably to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station – also a regional bus hub) and preserving all of County Connection's 600-series school routes.

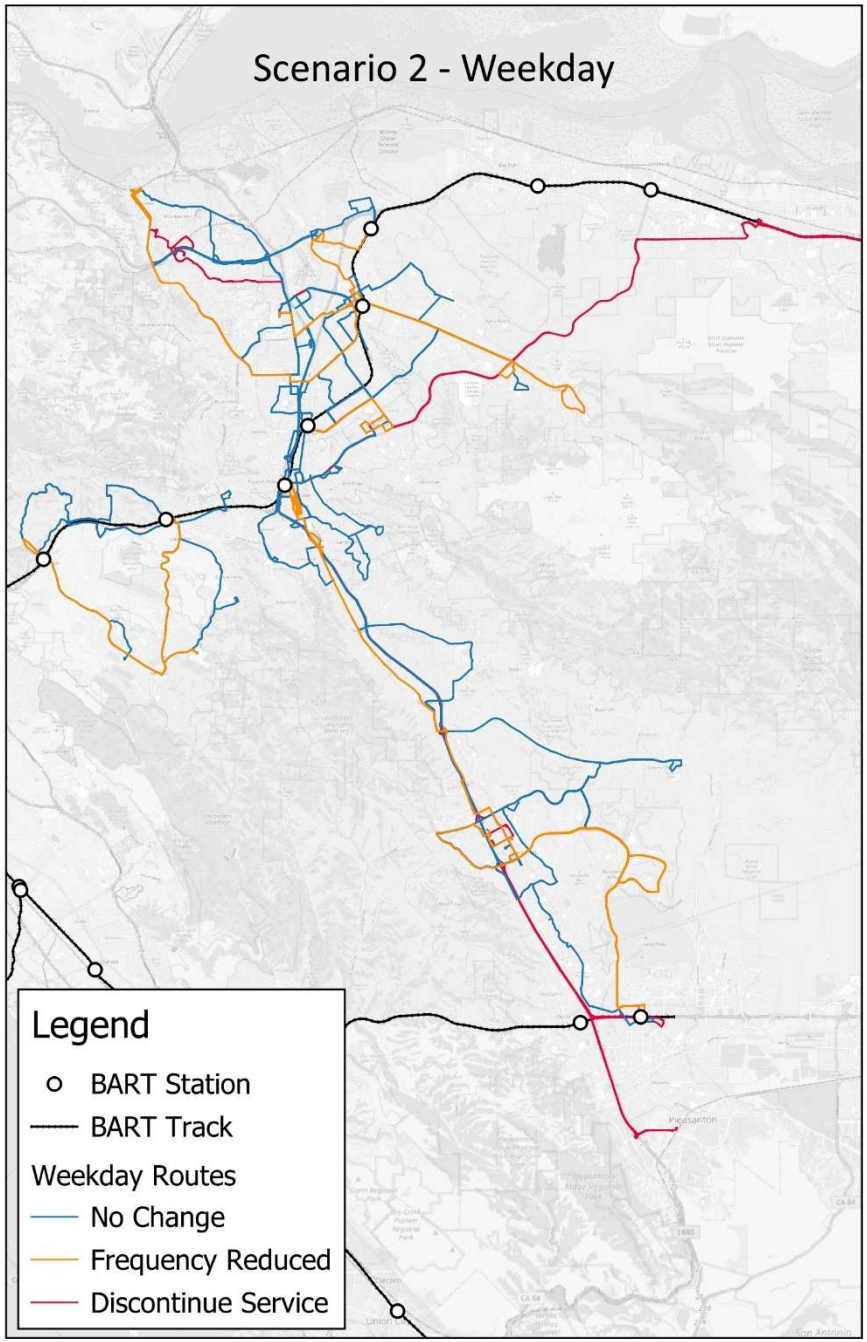
Action Requested:
Staff and the O&S Committee request that the Board approve a preferred scenario and adopt the Alternative Service Plan.

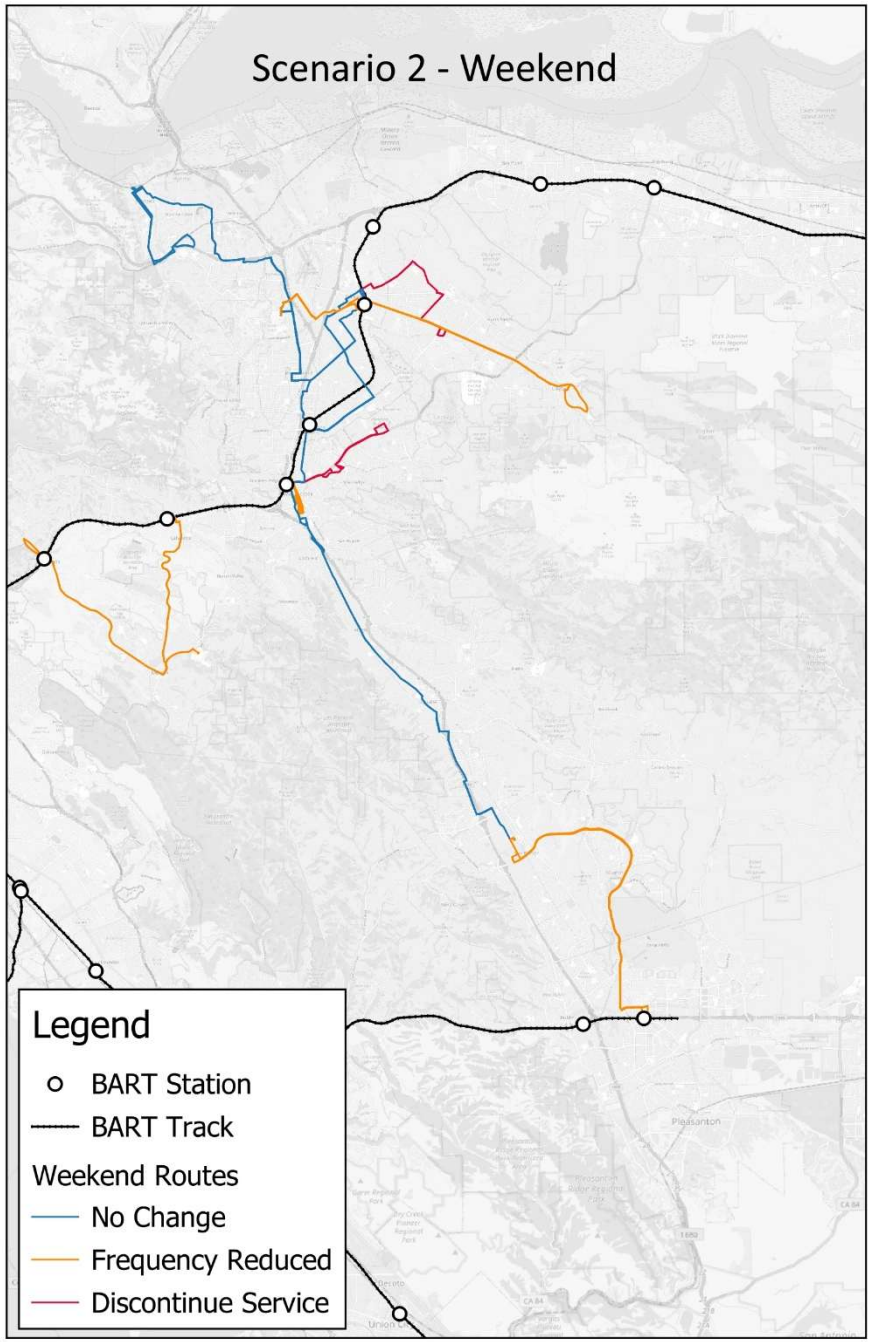
Attachments:
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Attachment 2: Map of Scenario 2
Attachment 3: Map of Scenario 3

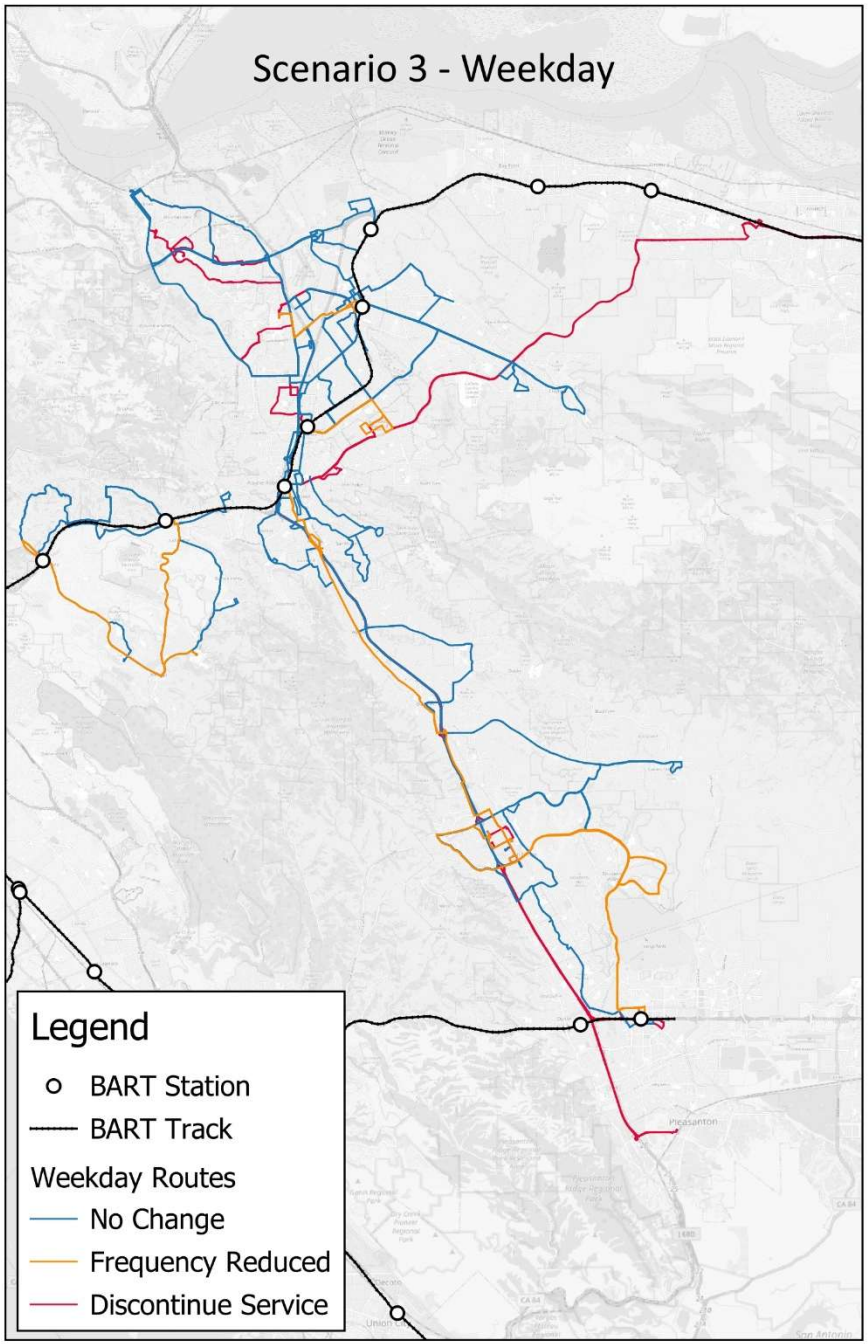
Scenarios 2 & 3 by route (listed in descending order of productivity)

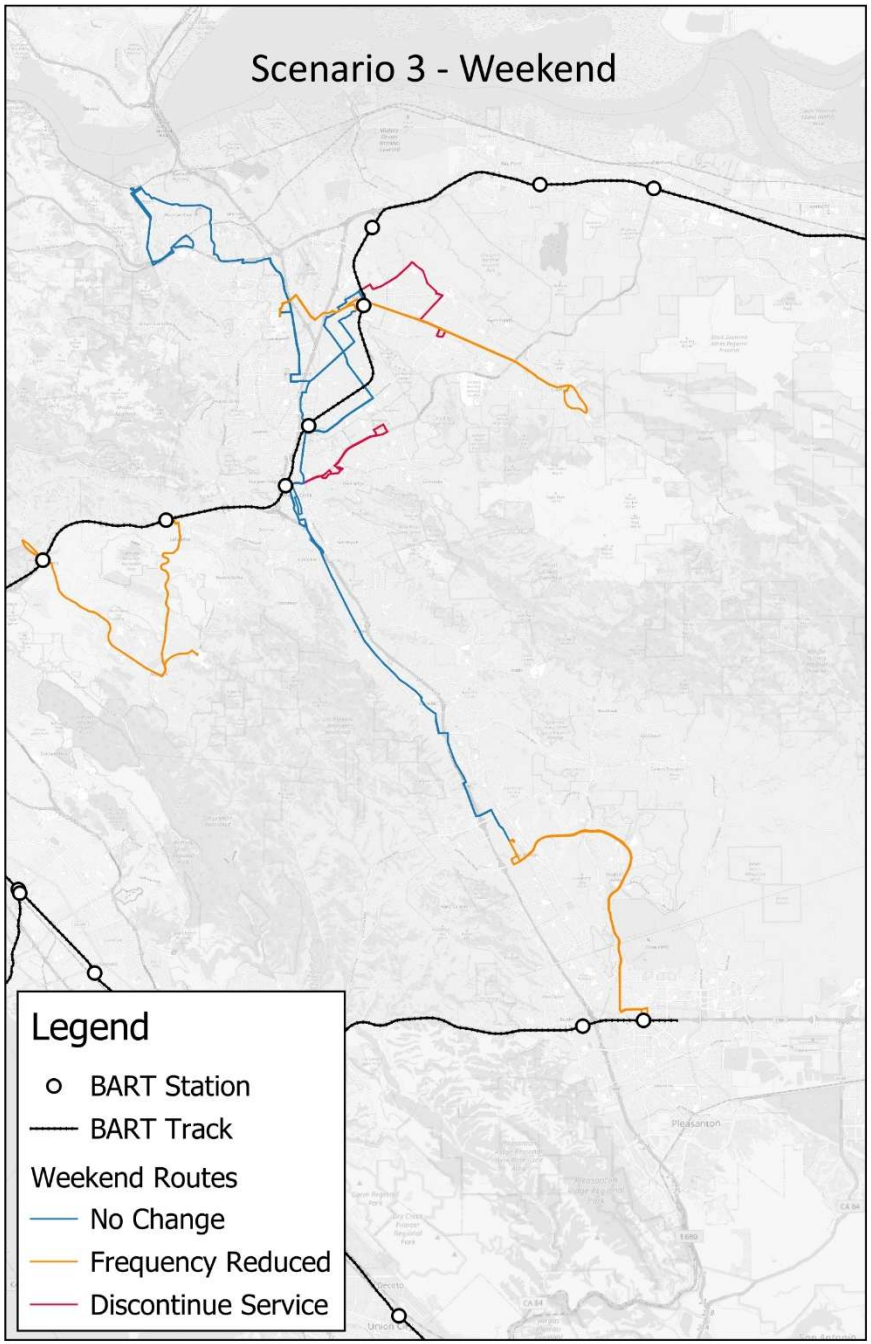
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600s	School Service	n/a	1-2/day	1-2/day	1-2/day	School Days	All

Time (in minutes) between buses:	30
Frequency partially reduced:	15-30
Frequency reduced:	60
Service discontinued:	X


Scenario 2 - Weekday
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekday Routes
No Change
Frequency Reduced
Discontinue Service


Scenario 2 - Weekend
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekend Routes
No Change
Frequency Reduced
Discontinue Service


Scenario 3 - Weekday
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekday Routes
No Change
Frequency Reduced
Discontinue Service


Scenario 3 - Weekend
Legend
BART Station
BART Track
Weekend Routes
No Change
Frequency Reduced
Discontinue Service