

# REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUE PAPER

Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
14	09/14/09	Open	Information	09/02/09

Subject: Adjustments to Route 14

## ISSUE

Update on changes to Route 14 - Norwood to take place in January 2010.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

None.

## FISCAL IMPACT

None.

## DISCUSSION

On January 4, 2010, PRIDE Industries will be moving their operations from 555 Display Way, in North Sacramento, to 1281 National Drive in North Natomas. The new PRIDE facility is currently served by Route 13, which has roughly hourly service from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekends. On August 24, 2009, staff presented to the Board of Directors a cost-neutral proposal to adjust the alignment of the nearby Route 14 so that it would also provide front-door service, essentially doubling the number of trips to and from PRIDE, giving them twice-an-hour service.

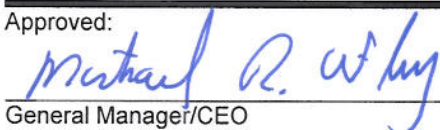
In order to compensate for the additional 2 minutes in each direction that would be spent on the new PRIDE loop, staff recommended at that time to discontinue Route 14 service into the Strawberry Manor neighborhood. After discussion, the Board tabled the proposal and directed staff to prepare a detailed review of all other options, in the hope that service could be provided to the new PRIDE facility without eliminating service in Strawberry Manor.

Due to fixed deadlines in RT's schedule preparation process, major changes to Route 14 and/or other routes can no longer be made until April 2010. In order to provide some additional service to PRIDE Industries in January 2010, Route 14 will be modified, effective January 3, 2010, so that two existing trips will do the loop to PRIDE Industries, coinciding, as best as possible, with PRIDE's shift changes at 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

In terms of capacity, this level of service should be sufficient. There are expected to be 45 passengers per day, only three of which are expected to use wheelchairs. With the two additional Route 14 trips complementing the existing Route 13 trips, the level of service should be sufficient to provide PRIDE with a reasonable, if not ideal, level of comfort, convenience, and reliability.

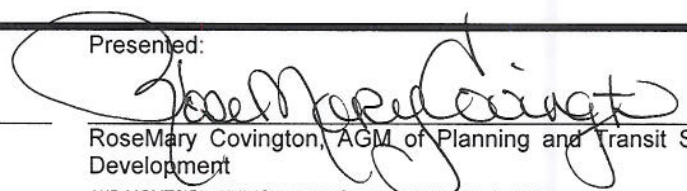
Approved:

General Manager/CEO



Presented:

RoseMary Covington, AGM of Planning and Transit System Development



Agenda Item No.	Board Meeting Date	Open/Closed Session	Information/Action Item	Issue Date
14	09/14/09	Open	Information	09/02/09

Subject: Adjustments to Route 14

In the meantime, staff will continue discussions with PRIDE Industries and conduct outreach activities in Strawberry Manor to determine the effect of various options on present and potential users of the service.

### Combining Routes 16 and 18

Staff has considered a number of options to allow the Route 14 to run straight up Norwood, while alternate routes provided service to Strawberry Manor. For example, if Routes 16 and 18 were combined into one route, there would be enough time to run the Strawberry Manor loop and still have adequate rest and meal breaks. For Route 16 passengers, there would be tradeoffs--the route would become longer and slower, due to having to go through Strawberry Manor, but a transfer would also be eliminated for many passengers. An estimated 50 passengers per day transfer between Routes 16 and 18, which is 20 percent of the combined daily ridership of 250. Combining the two routes would save these passengers the hassle and cost of transferring, as well as the anxiety of making a tight connection.

Issues that remain to be examined under this option include:

- ⚡ A shorter route through Strawberry Manor – the lack of ADA accessible stop locations on the alternate streets
- ⚡ Elimination of service deviation on the combined route
- ⚡ No Saturday service on the combined route – Route 14 could provide weekend service

Attachment 1 contains a detailed discussion of several potential options including the 16-18 combination. Staff will continue with its analysis and upon completion of outreach, will return to the Board with a recommendation to be implemented in April 2010.

## PRIDE INDUSTRIES RELOCATION SERVICE CHANGE ANALYSIS

### **Base Case (No Changes)**

While many Board members expressed an inclination to provide service to PRIDE, staff was asked to examine the necessity of providing an additional route. If Route 14 was not changed, PRIDE would still be served by Route 13 once every 60-75 minutes. There are expected to be 45 PRIDE employees riding per day, with probably no more than three wheelchair users. Most of the ridership would take place around 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Route 13, which has fairly light loads and which uses a full-size bus, should be able to handle these loads satisfactorily, although there might be an impact on passenger comfort and on-time performance.

### **Adding PRIDE Loop With No Other Changes**

Serving PRIDE Industries on National Drive would add an estimated 2 minutes of running time in each direction to Route 14. Under normal circumstances, it would not be a major issue to add 2 minutes of running time to a route. However, Route 14 is currently scheduled extremely tightly. From Arden/Del Paso, it leaves only 1 minute after a train. At Truxel & Gateway, it lays over only 3 minutes, and when it returns to Arden/Del Paso, it arrives only 5 minutes before the train. Thus, adding even 2 minutes in each direction could legitimately disrupt connections. The need to save time on Route 14 prompted staff to investigate a multitude of options centered around the Strawberry Manor loop.

### **Strawberry Manor Elimination**

The idea of eliminating service to Strawberry Manor was originally put forward by several experienced front-line personnel who participated in a roundtable Service Planning Workshop held in January 2008. Our drivers explained that the area has very little ridership and adds a lot of time to the route, especially because the bus must go slow through the speed bumps. This idea was supported by the entire group, including customer service representatives, planners, schedulers, road supervisors, and an outside consultant. Even if the Strawberry Manor loop was removed from Route 14, there would still be service to the neighborhood via route deviations on Route 16, which are already allowed, although the 20 daily boardings currently taking place in Strawberry Manor would probably be considered excessive to be served only by deviations.

### **Off-Route Solutions**

Several solutions have been brought forward by staff and others involving the use of off-routes, i.e., using a different alignment on different trips or different days. Examples include running the new PRIDE service and serving Strawberry Manor on alternating trips, or running the PRIDE service at 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. only, which is what will be done in January.

Experience has shown, however, that inconsistent routing usually leads to confusion for passengers and operating personnel alike. RT's contacts at PRIDE have also indicated that complicated schedules make mobility training more difficult. For these reasons, it is desirable to find a permanent solution that does not involve off-routes.

### **Shortened Strawberry Manor Loop**

Another suggestion that has been put forward by staff and others is to use a shorter loop through Strawberry Manor. This is unfortunately impossible due to the condition of the streets and sidewalks, which do not meet ADA standards.

### **Route 16 - Del Paso Heights/Norwood Avenue**

One option reviewed by staff was to move the Strawberry Manor loop from Route 14 onto Route 16, which is a Neighborhood Ride bus. Qualitatively, the Strawberry Manor loop is a better fit for Neighborhood Ride service than full-size bus service. Generally, full-size buses should be on major streets going higher speeds, whereas the small Neighborhood Ride buses are more suited to navigating narrower streets, meandering into windy neighborhoods, and going over speed bumps, such as the speed bumps on Fairbanks and Olmstead in Strawberry Manor.

The Strawberry Manor loop adds roughly 6 minutes of running time in each direction. Adding the Strawberry Manor loop to the current Route 16 schedule would result in layovers of roughly 3 minutes at one end and 6 minutes at the other. This would probably be sufficient to run the route on-time, but in order to provide adequate rest and meal break time, headways would have to be slipped, i.e., every couple hours, departure times would have to be shifted back about 20 minutes.

Currently, Route 16 departs from Arden/Del Paso every hour, at 1 minute past the hour. Based on conversations with passengers and customer service, staff feels these uniform 60 minute headways help make Route 16 an attractive route for customers, especially compared to Route 14 which has some 75-minute headways and a much longer route.

### **Combining Routes 16 and 18**

If Routes 16 and 18 were combined into one route, there would be enough time to run the Strawberry Manor loop and still have adequate rest and meal breaks. For Route 16 passengers, there would be tradeoffs--the route would become longer and slower, due to having to go through Strawberry Manor, but a transfer would also be eliminated for many passengers. An estimated 50 passengers per day transfer between Routes 16 and 18, which is 20 percent of the combined daily ridership of 250. Combining the two routes would save these passengers the hassle and cost of transferring, as well as the anxiety of making a tight connection.

One of the problems with combining the routes is that both of these routes currently provide route deviations. If we combine the routes and maintain the deviations, the schedule becomes unreliable. If Routes 16 and 18 routes were combined into a 45 minute trip, deviations could jeopardize the attractiveness of the route for the fixed-route passengers who make up most of the ridership.

Currently, Route 16 has about 5-6 deviations per week, while Route 18 has about 10 per week. CBS division reports that the majority of the deviations are made by roughly 6 individuals going to the same locations. While a great deal of the destinations are near fixed-route service, many of the individuals making these trips have limited mobility--they would not be able to make the 2-3 block walk to a bus stop--so they depend on the deviations.

If Routes 16 and 18 were combined and Strawberry Manor was added to the combined route, it might be necessary to discontinue the route deviation policy so as to maintain reliable service to the remainder of the 250 passengers.

### **Route Deviation Area**

Any change to the fixed-route pattern of Route 16 changes the area which can be served by route deviations. Normally, deviations are provided anywhere within three quarters of a mile from the fixed route. If fixed-route service to Strawberry Manor was added to Route 16, the new route deviation coverage area would, under normal circumstance, be extended beyond the canal at the west end of Strawberry Manor. Due to the difficulty of getting to this area, however, there would have to be a rule expressly forbidding deviations there.

### **Saturday Service**

Another problem with combining Routes 16 and 18 is that Route 18 does not currently have Saturday service. Saturday service was eliminated on Route 18 in January 2008 due to low ridership and budget reductions. This service could be reinstated at a cost of roughly \$28,000 per year. Assuming RT cannot afford to reinstate service, the new combined route would have to run a shortened route on Saturdays, essentially like the existing Route 16.

Assuming Route 18 is not reinstated on Saturdays, Route 16 alone would then have insufficient time to run the Strawberry Manor loop. The options would be to (1) run the Strawberry Manor loop on Route 16 and slip headways, (2) have Route 14 run the Strawberry Manor loop on weekends only, or (3) to run Strawberry Manor as a deviation service only on Saturday, without fixed route service to it.

### **Next Steps**

Due to the multitude of options, all of which have strengths and weaknesses, the next steps are to take input from the Board of Directors and conduct outreach with the residents of Strawberry Manor and PRIDE Industries employees and patrons. The deadline for April 2010 service changes to be adopted by the Board of Directors is ~~February 8, 2010~~ *December 14, 2009.*