Bus Survey Follow-up Report
December 19, 2006

There was a good response to the bus route survey, including 243 responses on the WEB, 10 responses by e-mail, and 36 responses by paper. There were 19 comments about the Rockridge Route, although Rockridge was not part of the proposed route change. Many of the comments and questions were similar so we have grouped them below. Our responses are listed under each category.

Comments:

Time

1. **Blue Route- 30 Minutes intervals appear too long**
    - During the majority of the day, all the route times between the buses will be 15 minutes. The Blue and Orange Routes are 30 minutes in length but there are two busses on both routes so the time between the buses will be 15 minutes. During most of the day the Blue and Orange Routes will also be operating simultaneously and will be scheduled to arrive at bus stops at a uniform sequence. This will yield a bus passing by most bus stops every 7 ½ minutes, in one direction or another.
2. **Wait time – They seem to increased from current**
    - The wait time for some routes will change from 10 minutes to 15 minutes. However for some individuals the wait time can decrease from the 10-15 minutes to 7 ½ minutes since eight busses per hour will be going by the bulk of the bus stops.
3. **Due to longer routes, will it be more difficult to stick to a schedule?**
    - Bus management does recognize the increased challenge there will be in keeping to this new schedule. However, we believe the increased work on our part will be worth the increase in service for our lab customers.
4. **Schedules are needed - belief is that LBNL would just say every 10, 15, 30 minutes without a formal schedule.**
    - We agree. It was necessary to wait until the final details of the routes were determined. With that now accomplished the finalized schedules are completed and attached to this report.
5. **More waiting for Building 50/65 Occupants who do not need to use the current onsite shuttle.**
    - We do acknowledge that for people formerly just using the Hearst Route the wait time will increase from 10 to 15 minutes.
6. **30 minutes too long from campus to LBNL in the evenings. Many meetings end past 5:45pm.**
    - The new routes do not reduce the services currently provided to the campus in the evenings. However, we have noted this comment for future review.
7. **Less Buses/more lines especially at BART.**
    - For the Off-site riders, especially those using BART, there will actually be an increased number of buses picking up lab employees. There are currently six buses per hour that pass by BART. With the new routes there will be eight buses per hour passing by BART, four entering the Blackberry Gate and four entering the Strawberry Gate. This will greatly improve the service to the upper hill employees who will now be able to go from BART to their building in a much more direct path and likely without a bus transfer. For example, a rider at Building 62/66 now takes about 20 minutes to get to BART, and will now make the trip in about 15 minutes.
8. **Takes too long during lunch.**
    - During lunch there will be eight busses per hour circulating through the lab and the downtown areas. There are currently only six buses per hour during lunch on the Hearst Route. As our lab employees get familiar with the new routes there will be opportunities for them to see which of the routes will get then off and back on the lab site the most efficiently. In many cases the additional two buses per hour will add flexibility and reduce the time between options during lunch.

Traffic/Route Length

9. **Blue Route - PM Rush Hour Traffic.**
    - Rush hour traffic will always be a problem, not only for LBNL Buses but for all bus systems in the Bay Area. With the two additional buses per hour in the new route system it will give us greater flexibility in getting people to their off-site locations than our current system provides during the rush hour.
10. **Long ride through the lab - Life Sciences.**
    - The design of the new route system allows for more flexibility in getting directly to buildings that are on the main circulation route for the lab. For those buildings that are closer to the Strawberry Gate the Orange Route will provide a shorter ride from off-site to their building and the need to change buses from the off-site to the on-site buses would not be necessary. Leaving the lab would be more expeditious by taking the Blue Route. Conversely, for those buildings that are closer to the Blackberry Gate (Building 90 excepted) the Blue Route will provide the same ride to get to the lab and for most there will not be a bus transfer to get to their buildings. The Orange Route will take them off-site in a similar time as is now experienced. For the Building 90 occupants we have attempted to mitigate the impact of delays by synchronizing the Blue Route with the On-site Green Route.
11. **Reducing bus service from Campus does not help the Physics/Nuclear Science Division.**
    - There will be two more buses circulating around the campus and through the lab. Four Buses per hour will be exiting the Lab down from Buildings 50/70, and 65 and four will entering the lab at the Blackberry Gate. Employees in the 50/70 area seeking to travel to the south side of campus (Bancroft Route) will now be able to directly board the Blue bus at all stops to a South-side destination (which is now only from Building 84). The new routes will provide this same level of service to Bancroft in a more accessible way, on a 15 minute schedule.
12. **Orange Route - longer to get to destination (Gayley Road) which may be congested.**
    - The Orange Route does increase the time between buses from 10 to 15 minutes but also provide direct service to many of the lab buildings without having to make a bus transfer. For many the actual time required to get to and from off-site location to individual buildings will either remain the same or decrease.

Route Stops

13. **Cafeteria not a good spot for a hub /Eliminate parking spaces.**
    - In designing the new routes the most likely hub will be at the Cafeteria bus stop. However, there are still other options available. As the new system rolls out we will evaluate where the optimal "Hub" will be, based upon actual user patterns. If it does turn out to be the Cafeteria bus stop we will evaluate how to best make the changes to enable this stop to become the hub for bus operations. The loss of parking spaces will be the last resort but since it is a possibility, Facilities Bus Services wanted to identify this as a possible impact.
14. **No Stops at Building 88.**
    - Bus Service will not change on providing service to any existing on-site bus stop. Bus service to Building 88 will remain the same as it is with the existing services with the exception that the service cycle time will be changed from 10 minutes to 15 minutes.
15. **No lab stops to 74, 83 and 84 from inside the lab; Green Route should include 74/84 and 62/66.**
    - Extending the Green route to buildings 74, 83 and 85 was considered. However, with the increased service being provided to these areas by both the Blue and Orange Routes it was not felt that the Green Route would add significantly to service being provided. Additionally, there are cost savings that will be captured with the new bus route system and adding this extension to the on-site Green Route would negate these cost savings. It is also recognized that in some instances employees will need to use the Strawberry Gate bus stop and walk to their location.
16. **No stops by Building 55 and 64.**
    - Bus Service will not change on providing service to any existing on-site bus stop. Bus service to Buildings 55 and 64 will remain the same as it is with the existing services with the exception that the service cycle time will be changed from 10 minutes to 15 minutes.
17. **BART to Berkeley - AM- Blue, PM- Orange; Confusion especially for Visitors.**

- The implementation of any new system will likely be confusing at first. However, as we become accustomed to the new routes they will become less confusing. We strongly believe that the new routes will eventually become less confusing while it increases service to our lab customers.

18. Orange Route should stop at West Circle.

- This was considered. However, in order to have the Orange Route circulate through the West Circle it would extend the route beyond its 30 minute cycle and the route would not be able to stay in sync with the Blue Route or the On-site (Green) Route. Since West Circle service is being provided by the Blue Route and is not being impacted it would not be prudent to add service to the West Circle route. For those wishing to use the Orange Route they could walk the one block to the Oxford bus stop and catch the Orange Route.

19. Routes too long.

- The new routes do increase the wait time from 10 to 15 minutes for some of the existing routes. However, the primary benefit to the new system is that for many of the people who ride the bus the overall time to reach their building will be less than what they currently experience by using the off-site buses and then transferring to an on-site bus to actually reach their building.

20. Green Route - no direct shuttle from some areas to Medical.

- This comment is correct. We acknowledge that the new bus routes do not provide the same level of service to everyone currently using the LBNL on-site buses. However, the new routes do dramatically increase bus services to a grater number of our fellow employees. Going to Health Services (Building 26) utilizing the bus services should only be used if the health problem is not critical and time is not essential. If there is ever a need to get to Health services immediately. Please dial 7991. That service will send emergency personnel to those needing it quicker than using the on-site bus services.

21. 3 Routes are confusing; Hearst- going both ways; Color codes on Buses?

- The new routes will take some time to get used to but they do increase service to the majority of the lab customers. We recognize that the different colored routes will cause some initial confusion and we will make efforts to clearly identify the buses and the routes they are on.

<u>Safety</u>

22. Catching bus Stops in Unsafe Places (opposite side of Stop 13 in front of Bldg. 67)

- It is always a concern of ours that people might do things that they shouldn't and get hurt. The problem of having bus stops on one or both sides of a road and people running across the road to catch it is a problem that all bus services share. We will publish articles in TABL encouraging our people to not run for the buses and especially to only cross the streets in a safe manner, but in the end our riders need to take assume the personal obligation to act responsibly.

<u>General</u>

23. Bike Racks are full - so increase from 10 to 15 makes the wait longer and more bicyclists for each bus.

- Although the length of the wait is increasing from 10 to 15 minutes there will be two more buses per hour picking people up from the downtown/BART area. We will monitor whether the buses will need additional bike racks and will make adjustments as needed to accommodate our commuters who wish to bring their bikes.

24. People would be driving cars more.

- The new bus routes actually provide greater service to the majority of the lab employees, especially getting to the Lab and going off-site. We sincerely hope everyone will give the new system time to work out any kinks before deciding to begin using their individual vehicles.

25. Cut off top of the hill (Upper Hill).

- In addition to the vastly improved service to the Building 67, 66 and 62 areas, bus service is still being provided to the to Building 74/84 bus stop. However, there are some instances when some individuals will find it more expedient to utilize the Strawberry Gate bus stop and walk the additional block up to building 74/84.

26. **Offsite Buses are for Lab employees not students (who have badges and use the bus to get around campus).**
    - The bus services and bus schedules are designed to support the activities of the LBNL employees and the students participate in LBNL activities. If UCB students also find it beneficial to utilize these routes we should consider this as an unanticipated benefit to those students. However, if their ridership should create the situation where they are taking all the room on our buses we will appropriately address that situation.

27. **Spoke to Bus Drivers and they are not sure whether they can complete their route.**
    - We have had practice runs with the majority of the bus drivers, some could not make it in on the training day. The schedules do seem to work. However, we will be monitoring this as we implement the route and will make appropriate adjustments.
28. **Bus Drivers do not have the appropriate customer service attitude to answer questions by the riders re: which bus to take.**
    - This is a dynamic process. We will continue working with the bus drivers to provide information. However, there will be so many variations on how to get to specific buildings and locations that it will take some time to develop an understanding of which bus to take.

<u>Compilation of Suggestions</u>

1. **Incorporate Building 90 to Blue/Offsite Route.**
    - This was reevaluated and it was determined that adding the Building 90 loop to the Blue Route would extend the Blue Route beyond the 30 minute and would through it out of sync with the Orange Route schedule. However, to compensate for this we have synchronized the On-site Green Route with the Blue Route at Building 65. This change should produce nearly the same result while allowing the Blue Route to stay on schedule.
2. **Change to more modern equipment.**
    - Once the new routes settle out we intend to evaluate what bus equipment (both size and type) will be most appropriate for the lab's use. We are a part of the GSA Fleet Services Program so changes may take time to implement. However, we are pursing this path.
3. **Larger busses during peak hours**
    - The narrow roads and tight turns at the lab actually dictate the size of the buses we can use. The New Route Plan also adds two more buses per hour, which should alleviate some of the load during our peak hours. Once the routes settle down we will again start the rider logs so we can determine what buses will be needed during the different times of the day.
4. **Arrival times at BART should be offset; arrival time not too near each other (2 minutes between blue and orange then a longer wait in between)**
    - The bus schedules call for the Blue and Orange Routes to be staggered. If all is on schedule they will be 7 ½ minutes apart.
5. **Bus Stops clearly marked**
    - We will survey this to make sure the bus stops are clearly marked.
6. **Amtrak Station in Berkeley?**
    - Providing bus service directly to the Amtrak Station would be an expansion of current bus services. For this New Bus Route Plan we are maintaining the current scope of operations. However, this issue will be brought to the Transportation Advisory Committee for future consideration.
7. **Later Buses…until 8:00pm**
    - For this New Bus Route Plan we are maintaining the current hours of operation. However, this issue will be brought to the Transportation Advisory Committee for future consideration.
8. **Prefer more frequent service at peak hours then less during the rest of the day.**
    - The New Route Plan adds two more buses per hour, which should alleviate some of the load during our peak hours. Once the routes settle down we will again start the rider logs so we can determine what buses will be needed during the different times of the day.
9. **Bus Service during weekends and holidays for ALS Users**

- This would be an expansion of current services. While this may be beneficial, it is not part of the current New Bus Route Plan. We will contact ALS to determine whether this is a service that they would/could support.

10. **Big Schedules at Stops**
    - We will make them as big as we reasonably can.

11. **Clearly labeled/painted busses**
    - In addition to the signs that will be placed in the front windows and on the sides of the buses we are attempting to place a large colored circle on the front of the buses to indicate which route they are on. Also, during the start up, our bus drivers will remind people getting on the bus which route they are on. We hope these actions will help alleviate some of the initial confusion.
12. **Earlier busses (6:00am)**
    - For this New Bus Route Plan we are maintaining the current hours of operation. However, this issue will be brought to the Transportation Advisory Committee for future consideration.
13. **Riders from 937 need a Stop (Up University to p/u at northeast corner of University and Oxford**
    - The bus stop for Building 937 is on the South West corner of University and Oxford. (Same side of University as Building 937)
14. **Important that Strawberry Gate Bus Stop serves as a safe stop (car traffic from different directions)**
    - We agree. Entering Strawberry Gate on the Orange Route the bus would proceed to the Building 74/84 bus stop to let passengers off. For the Blue Route the bus would stop at the Strawberry Gate bus stop before exiting the Lab. Passengers would then need to safely and carefully walk to the Building 74/84/85 areas.
15. **Straight shot from 65 to BART**
    - The Orange Route is the most direct route from Building 65 to BART. However, it will need to make stops at the bus stops along the way.
16. **Horseshoe routes for offsite**
    - Several "Horseshoe" configurations have been reviewed over the past two years. However, they were not as efficient as the new route structure that was finally adopted.

Questions:

1. **Rockridge Route?**
    - Rockridge was not a part of this new bus route process. Rockridge will be evaluated separately.
2. **Why is this change happening?**
    - The primary need for this change is to provide better and more bus service to our lab employees. The new route system adds two more buses per hour going through the lab and down past the BART station. Additionally, many of the bus passengers that utilize the system for their daily commute will not need to transfer from the off-site bus to an on-site bus to get to and from their building. An attractive spin-off of implementing these new routes is that they will also save the lab overhead money and that money can then be used by the scientific divisions in their research. In all this is very much a win-win for the lab.
3. **Make up of members of the Transportation Committee**
    - The Transportation Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from nearly every scientific division and representatives from operations. The specific list is attached. You should also note that we endeavor to include not only all the divisions but also a good representation across all major buildings and the campus.
4. **Terminal points, if any, in bus Route/Wait time in terminal?**
    - We are still evaluating this issue. We would like to get a feel for where the busy areas are before we establish the terminus points.