



12 September 2023

Mark Carnopis - Public Information Officer - Valley Regional Transit
700 NE 2nd St., Meridian, ID 83642
Via Email: feedback@rideVRT.org

Re: VRT Route 1 - Discontinued

Mr. Carnopis and the VRT Board of Directors,

The Barber Valley Neighborhood Association in Boise submitted written testimony on 6 June opposing the discontinuation of VRT Route 1 (Harris Ranch). We'd like to take this opportunity to add updated testimony to our 6 June letter, which is attached to this correspondence. Our updated testimony is a result of the gracious offer by your VRT senior leadership team to attend our August monthly neighborhood meeting. The presentation by Jason Rose and Stephen Hunt was outstanding and the resulting discussion with Jason, Stephen, and Elaine Clegg was very helpful for our neighbors concerned about the loss of transit service to a Master Planned Community built around transit and alternative modes of transportation. We learned an immense amount about the business decision to discontinue the non-performing VRT Route 1 and the available options for transit users in our neighborhood. We also learned that an appeal to the City of Boise for additional funding to keep Route 1 open would be well-received by VRT leadership.

We communicated to our membership and asked them to contact the City of Boise requesting additional funding to keep Route 1 operating beyond the planned closure date of June 2024. We hope our public engagement with the City of Boise motivates a reconsideration of the decision to discontinue VRT Route 1 for the following reasons:

1. **It's the City of Boise Plan and is codified in Specific Plan 01.** Harris Ranch is designed with the "appropriate building densities and land uses" such that all residents "are within walking distance of probable future transit stops permitting public transit to become a viable alternative to cars" (Source SP-01 City Code). The city codified a master planned community built around transit and alternative transportation options; opting out of transit service now clearly contradicts the City of Boise Specific Plan 01, which is City CODE and not merely a comprehensive plan 'vision'.
2. **New High-Density Housing Units Complete in 2023.** We understand from the VRT presentation that Route 1 has been a 'non-performing' route for many years. However, we believe it's a flawed decision to eliminate the route just when the planned density that originally justified it, is becoming a reality. More than 300 additional multi-family housing units will be complete in 2023 with more to follow in 2024.
3. **New Idaho Outdoor Fieldhouse.** The Albertsons' Family Foundation investment in the City of Boise through its world-class facility will be ill-served if Route 1 is discontinued. The Idaho Outdoor Fieldhouse will open later this year and is within ¼ mile of Route 1 and will serve para-athletes living and training at this soon-to-be internationally acclaimed facility.

4. **3 senior living facilities.** Two of the three facilities are on the route and the third is within ¼ mile of a Route 1 stop. Seniors overwhelmingly rely on transit – retaining Route 1 is equitable for our senior neighbors.

We are respectfully requesting additional funding from the City of Boise to retain this route beyond the summer of 2024 to determine if our new neighbors will take advantage of transit and turn VRT Route 1 into a high-performing route. We believe it is an extremely short-sighted public policy decision to back out of transit service to a master planned community designed for transit and we hope VRT and City of Boise leadership reconsider funding options to keep the route open.

Barber Valley Neighborhood Association Board

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Bre Brush, Mayor of Boise Transportation Advisor (bbrush@cityofboise.org)

Stephen Hunt, VRT Chief Development Officer (Shunt@rideVRT.org)

Jason Rose, VRT Communications Director (JRose@rideVRT.org)

June 6, 2023

Mark Carnopis
Public Information Officer
Valley Regional Transit
700 NE 2nd St.
Meridian, ID 83642



Dear Mark Carnopis and the Valley Regional Transit Executive Board of Directors,

The Barber Valley Neighborhood Association opposes Valley Regional Transit's plan to eliminate the Route 1 bus service to Harris Ranch as outlined in VRT's Bus Network Redesign.

BVNA acknowledges that Route 1 ranks among the system's bottom 25% in terms of ridership. However, BVNA wishes to remind VRT that Harris Ranch, as a master planned community, remains under construction. Several high-density, multi-family apartment complexes totaling more than 300 units remain scheduled for completion along VRT Route 1 in the next 6 months.

Before the first rooftops appeared in Harris Ranch, Idaho Smart Growth awarded the community its 2007 Mixed Use award for its "diversity in housing" and its "well-connected transportation system that encourages walking, biking, and transit."

Sixteen years later, Harris Ranch's diversity in housing is finally taking shape. Developers have several multi-family projects designed and under construction along East Warm Springs Avenue. These projects will bring hundreds of renters to Harris Ranch; many may seek bus transportation to downtown Boise. We cannot know the true demand for Route 1 until our new neighbors settle in. We hope the service remains available as they establish commuting habits to downtown.

In the best interests of our future neighbors, BVNA asks VRT to preserve Route 1 to Harris Ranch until our community achieves full buildout so that we may know the true demand for ridership. Thank you for your service to the community and thank you for considering our feedback on the proposed VRT route changes.

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