

RTD's responses to Stephen J. Salvatore's letter dated August 14, 2025
Regarding "The Transit Disaster We Warned About"

1. Legal Authority

He Said: RTD has "no legal authority" to operate intercity/intracity service without city consent.

RTD Said:

- State law (Cal. Pub. Util. Code §§ 50010, 50075.5) explicitly authorizes RTD to provide countywide service.
- Competitive bidding is required every 5 years for intercity service, not city consent, or that RTD enters into agreements with San Joaquin County cities.
- RTD's boundaries countywide expansion was requested by SJCOG as part of the regional transit plan. Accordingly, Van Go! service is provided in accordance with RTD's rights.

2. Ridership & Costs

He Said: Routes like Van Go! and Hoppers 97, 95, and 793 are a "transit disaster" with "woeful" numbers that are indefensible by any professional transit standard.

RTD Said:

- Van Go! serves riders with no other mobility options; low density service always costs more but provides equity.
- **Hopper 97: Salvatore cherry-picked outdated FY2023 ramp-up data (\$358/ride).** Current FY2025: **1.94 riders/hour, \$128/ride**, with ridership growing year over year (**Salvatore's most egregious misrepresentation**).
- Hopper 95: Adjusted for viability and consistency with the rest of the Hopper network, now at approximately hourly frequency connecting Stockton, Manteca, and Escalon.
- Hopper 793: Weekend service was only reinstated in 2025 after the COVID suspension in response to repeated rider and community requests; early ridership is still stabilizing.
- **System-wide comparison:** A chart of all transit providers in San Joaquin County shows RTD is the *best positioned* on both ridership and operating cost — disproving the claim that our performance is "indefensible by any standard."

Comparison: RTD and City Transit Systems in San Joaquin County (NTD 2023 Data)					
2023 NTD Data	Annual Unlinked Passengers	Annual Revenue Service Hours (RSH)	Total Annual Operating Expenses	Passengers per Revenue Service Hour	Operating Cost per Passenger
San Joaquin RTD	2,301,789	197,664	\$42,349,184	11.60	\$18.40
	86%				
City of Lodi	184,061	27,723	\$4,505,461	6.60	\$24.48
	7%				
City of Tracy	121,148	34,852	\$5,564,951	3.50	\$45.94
	5%				
City of Manteca	56,501	16,306	\$2,608,612	3.50	\$46.17
	2%				
City of Escalon	1,242	790	\$232,804	1.60	\$187.44
	0.05%				

3. Fleet

He Said: RTD wastes money maintaining too many buses.

RTD Said:

- RTD's spare ratio is 20% — fully consistent with Federal Transit Administration guidelines.
- Spares are required for inspections, overhauls, and to ensure service reliability across multiple service types and facilities.

4. Public Engagement

He Said: RTD had only "10 survey responses" and relied on an "outdated" Next-Gen study.

RTD Said:

- RTD collected input from 190+ survey responses, community meetings, SJCOG's UTN process, and stakeholder sessions.
- Next-Gen (2022) was a comprehensive operational analysis with growth forecasts through 2030. Studies like this guide service decisions over 4–5 years and are continually updated with new input (2024–25 SRTP and CTP surveys).

1. Performance Data – Identified per Hopper intercity routes and Van Go!, organized by FY--starting in FY 2019 to date.

County Hopper 23 Weekday - Stockton-Lodi

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	47,119	42,395	Suspended due to shortage of resources			Resources were allocated to expand Route 93, and the two routes were combined.	
Revenue Service Hours	4,145	2,994					
Operating Cost	\$546,694	\$349,464					
PPRH	11.37	14.16					
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$11.60	\$8.24					

County Hopper 90 Weekday - Stockton-Lathrop-Tracy

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	40,288	35,735	10,545	6,477	11,736	28,161	32,790
Revenue Service Hours	4,867	3,559	2,982	985	2,184	4,497	4,599
Operating Cost	\$671,158	\$374,560	\$481,294	\$197,361	\$508,114	\$886,270	\$1,016,840
PPRH	8.28	10.04	3.54	6.57	5.37	6.26	7.13
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$16.66	\$10.48	\$45.64	\$30.47	\$43.30	\$31.47	\$31.01

County Hopper 91 Weekday - Stockton-Manteca-Ripon

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	31,434	28,577	4,104	4,171	4,410	9,660	12,720
Revenue Service Hours	4,126	3,000	1,722	1,546	1,825	3,144	3,263
Operating Cost	\$564,161	\$314,499	\$281,402	\$292,727	\$411,896	\$567,296	\$661,036
PPRH	7.62	9.53	2.38	2.70	2.42	3.07	3.50
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$17.95	\$11.01	\$68.57	\$70.18	\$93.40	\$58.73	\$51.97

County Hopper 93 Weekday - Stockton-Lodi

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	25,791	25,024	17,095	15,953	22,605	40,713	48,513
Revenue Service Hours	3,550	2,585	2,690	2,143	2,618	5,470	6,165
Operating Cost	\$475,094	\$268,494	\$451,337	\$404,714	\$624,334	\$984,648	\$1,220,470
PPRH	7.26	9.68	6.35	7.44	8.63	7.44	7.87
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$18.42	\$10.73	\$26.40	\$25.37	\$27.62	\$24.19	\$25.16

County Hopper 95 Weekday - Stockton-Manteca-Escalon

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	New Route starting in FY2021		3,271	2,489	4,385	6,809	8,093
Revenue Service Hours			2,208	1,111	1,908	2,862	2,901
Operating Cost			\$342,610	\$217,517	\$436,959	\$559,168	\$635,374
PPRH			1.48	2.24	2.30	2.38	2.79
Operating Cost per Passenger			\$104.74	\$87.39	\$99.65	\$82.12	\$78.51

County Hopper 97 Weekday - Tracy-Manteca

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	8,750	7,854	2,254	Suspended due to shortage of resources	1,284	5,685	7,110
Revenue Service Hours	1,435	1,050	2,827		1,822	3,688	3,659
Operating Cost	\$197,788	\$110,463	\$412,887		\$460,921	\$827,503	\$916,859
PPRH	6.10	7.46	0.80		0.70	1.54	1.94
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$22.60	\$14.06	\$183.18		\$358.97	\$145.56	\$128.95

County Hopper 723 Weekend - Stockton-Lodi

Indicator	2019	2020*	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	10,534	21,579	6,905	Suspended due to shortage of resources			Restored as Route 793
Revenue Service Hours	1,605	3,486	1,188				
Operating Cost	\$213,602	\$573,791	\$224,696				
PPRH	6.56	6.19	5.81				
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$20.28	\$26.59	\$32.54				

*Higher ridership due to operating seven days a week during the pandemic.

County Hopper 793 Weekend - Stockton-Lodi

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	Previously Route 723						2,337
Revenue Service Hours							1,093
Operating Cost							\$213,874
PPRH							2.14
Operating Cost per Passenger							\$91.52

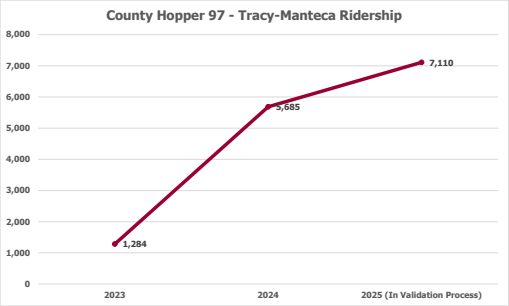
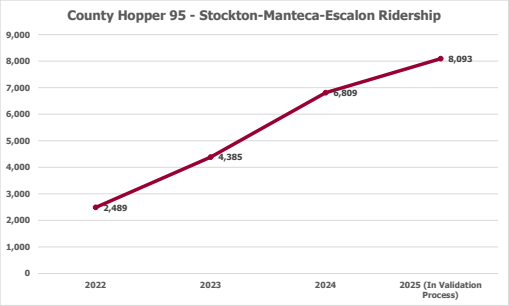
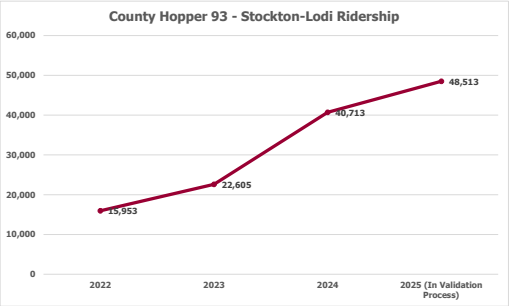
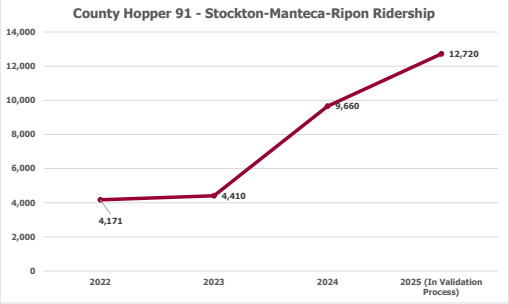
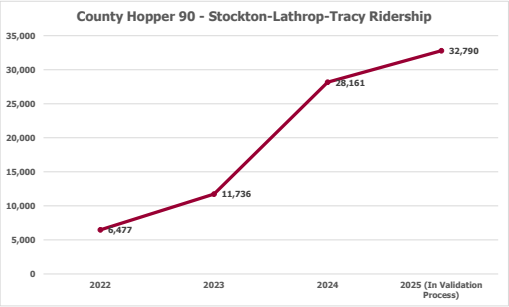
County Hopper 797 Weekend- Tracy-Lathrop-Stockton-Manteca

Indicator	2019	2020*	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	5,754	11,221	3,634	Suspended due to shortage of resources			1,253
Revenue Service Hours	1,589	3,175	1,153				798
Operating Cost	\$214,718	\$521,995	\$219,407				\$167,686
PPRH	3.62	3.53	3.15				1.57
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$37.32	\$46.52	\$60.38				\$133.83

*Higher ridership due to operating seven days a week during the pandemic.

Van Go! - San Joaquin County

Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (In Validation Process)
Ridership	15,022	57,615	16,078	29,056	32,154	24,735	9,542
Revenue Service Hours	14,116	35,134	11,593	18,235	19,803	15,532	9,424
Operating Cost	\$1,776,518	\$3,579,166	\$1,732,859	\$3,022,706	\$3,571,363	\$2,672,292	\$1,817,455
PPRH	1.06	1.64	1.39	1.59	1.62	1.59	1.01
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$118.26	\$62.12	\$107.78	\$104.03	\$111.07	\$108.04	\$190.47



RTD Support Spotlight



September 24, 2025: Stockton resident and transit rider Nate Knodt addressed the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, defending RTD's countywide role, emphasizing the need for accurate performance measures, and highlighting RTD's efficiency, ridership, and statutory authority to operate regional transit services.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeBH0YR_xQs