

North Central San Mateo

Community-Based Transportation Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Central San Mateo Community-Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) examines the transportation needs of the North Central neighborhood in the City of San Mateo. This project is part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Community-Based Transportation Planning Program, a collaborative planning process to identify transportation needs in low-income communities in the Bay Area. MTC's CBTP program advances findings of the "Lifeline Transportation Network Report," which was adopted by MTC and incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan.

In accordance with MTC guidelines, this Plan is being conducted by the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), in its role as the Congestion Management Agency for the county. C/CAG selected the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) to conduct the planning process for the North Central San Mateo CBTP.

The CBTP planning process was a collaborative effort involving community and stakeholder involvement at every stage of the process. A technical advisory committee (TAC) comprised of staff representing the City of San Mateo, the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA), C/CAG, MTC, and SamTrans was formed to oversee the process. Additionally, a stakeholder committee, comprised of North Central San Mateo residents, community based organizations, and stakeholders, was appointed by City staff and provided input throughout the planning process.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The first step of the Plan was to conduct an extensive existing conditions analysis in order to gain a thorough understanding of area demographics, existing transportation services, and related planning efforts. The analysis provided detailed background information regarding the transportation needs of the residents of this community.

The population of this area is around 8,000 residents, the majority (60%) of which are Hispanic/Latinos. Around a quarter (26%) of households identify themselves as "linguistically

isolated”, meaning that no one 14 years old and over speaks English “very well”, and the majority (83%) of these households speak Spanish. This is also a relatively young population, with a much higher percentage of individuals aged 24 and younger (41%) when compared to the city (28%) and the county (31%); the age group with the highest percentage of the total population within the project area is the age group between 25 and 34.

The percentage of residents living in poverty in the project area is more than double that of the City of San Mateo and of San Mateo County, with 14% of the project area’s individuals are living below the poverty level. Similarly, the percentage of households with incomes less than \$50,000 annually is higher in this community (51%) than in the City as a whole (37%). In each rented housing unit in the project area, there is an average of 4.23 people, which is considerably higher than the average number of people in rented housing in the City (2.59) and in the County (2.34).

An assessment of roadway conditions, transit service, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and commute patterns was also conducted. Findings from this analysis show that eleven percent (11%) of the households in the project area do not have access to a car, compared to seven percent (7%) in the City of San Mateo. In terms of where the residents are traveling to work, 27% (856) of workers over age 16 living in the project area work outside of San Mateo County. This is less than that of the City (31%) and the County (42%). Most workers living in the study area drive alone to work (73%), while 20% carpool, 9% take transit, and 6% walk or bike to work. These rates for carpooling, transit, and walk/bike are higher than those for the City or County.

SamTrans operates four bus routes that serve the project area in addition to their Paratransit service, Redi-Wheels, which provides transit

service to passengers who cannot independently ride regular SamTrans buses. Two of the SamTrans bus routes are “Caltrain Connection” routes, one is an “Express Service” routes, and one is a “Community Service” route that operates only on school days. Just adjacent to the project area, the San Mateo Caltrain Station provides regional rail service every half an hour on weekdays and hourly on weekends. There are currently no community shuttles that serve the project area.

The project area was assessed for transportation gaps identified in MTC’s “Lifeline Transportation Network Report.” The report does not identify any spatial gaps (deficiencies related to lack of bus service in a specific area) in the project area, and identifies SamTrans Route 292, which travels through the project area via Delaware Street, as a Lifeline Transportation Network route. The report states this route serves a pre-defined concentration of CalWORKs households and serves essential destinations. The temporal gap analysis (deficiencies related to lack of bus service during specific times) was based on MTC objectives for hours of operations and frequency of service and shows that Route 292 does not constitute a temporal gap in terms of hours of operation. SamTrans Route 292 is actually one of three of the 12 total identified SamTrans Lifeline routes that exceeds the hours of operation objectives for non-urban operators on all days. The route also meets all objectives for frequency of service except during the weekday night service hours.

A more detailed summary of the Existing Conditions Analysis can be found in Chapter 2, with the entire report in Appendix B.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The foundation of the North Central San Mateo CBTP is the input and support of the community and stakeholder agencies. Following the completion of the Existing Conditions Analysis,

staff from SamTrans and City of San Mateo partnered to involve residents, community-based organizations (CBOs), and agencies serving the North Central San Mateo community to gain valuable input into the planning process. Outreach was conducted between February and April of 2010. Based on input received from the stakeholder committee, the following outreach strategies were utilized to engage residents and CBOs:

- A survey of residents in the project area was mailed in English and Spanish asking residents to identify where they travel and by what mode, transportation gaps and barriers, and potential solutions to transportation issues;
- Travel survey distributed to the San Mateo Adult School and the San Mateo School
- Interviews with multiple CBOs and other agencies;
- Presentations given to seven CBOs;
- Public Service Announcements and Press Releases;
- Telephone Hotline for project inquiries; and
- Project website providing project updates and access to documents.

Results from the community outreach resulted in the following 17 community stated needs and potential solutions. The stated needs are organized into three categories: access to places outside the project area, access to transit and community facilities within of the project area, and information and cost.

Access to Places Outside of the Project Area

1. Getting to destinations north and south of the area for shopping, grocery, and medical appointments is costly and time-consuming on transit.

2. Taking transit to downtown San Francisco is expensive, time-consuming, and buses can be over-crowded.
3. The lack of school bus service makes it difficult to access schools outside of the project area.
4. Residents need better access to transit that serves the College of San Mateo.
5. East-West travel without an automobile is difficult.
6. Crossing El Camino as a pedestrian is dangerous.
7. Residents need better connections to hospitals.

Access to Transit Services and Local Community Facilities

8. The lack of school bus service makes it difficult for families with more than one child to drop them off at multiple schools in the area. Accessing schools outside of SamTrans service hours is also problematic.
9. Travel without an automobile at night, on weekends, and to school during non-school service is difficult.
10. Poor or nonexistent transit stop amenities in the area.
11. Residents do not feel safe waiting at transit stops.
12. Walking is dangerous in some locations because of fast-moving traffic, insufficient pedestrian crossing times, poor lighting, and harassment by loiterers.
13. Bicycling is common on sidewalks but is perceived as dangerous on the streets.

Information and Cost

14. There is a lack of information available about transportation options for residents without an automobile.

15. There is a need for information about transportation options in languages other than English.
16. There are no free bus transfers; trips that require more than one bus are costly.
17. The cost of SamTrans service is too high for many low-income residents, particularly for families paying for children.
A full description of the outreach effort is found in Chapter 3 of this document, with complete results and example surveys in Appendix C.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

Based on the stated needs identified through the community outreach process, staff developed ten transportation strategies, which are organized into the three areas shown below. These ten strategies were proposed based on community and stakeholder input and were evaluated in terms of their potential community impact, improvement to mobility, implementation requirements, and financial feasibility. A full description of the transportation strategies and the evaluation recommendations are contained in Chapter 4.

Access to Places Outside of the Project Area

1. Improve Existing School Bus Service
2. Augment Existing Transportation Service to Better Serve Key Destinations
3. Increase Frequency of Existing Transit Service
4. Reinstate the San Mateo Medical Center Shuttle Program

Access to Transit Services and Local Community Facilities

5. Establish Local Safe Routes to School Program
6. Improve Transit Stop Amenities
7. Improve Pedestrian Amenities

8. Improve Bicycle Amenities

Information and Cost

9. Improve Affordability of Public Transit for Low-Income Users
10. Increase Public Access to Information about Transportation Options

ACTION PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

Implementation of the CBTP relies on multiple jurisdictions and agencies, each responsible for different transportation strategies. Furthermore, funding for the transportation strategies may come from a variety of sources, including local, regional, state and federal sources. The action plan, included as Chapter 5 in this plan, identifies timeframes, funding sources, lead agencies and project partners.

The next steps necessary to advance the transportation strategies of this CBTP will take place over the next two years and include working with the identified project leads and obtaining project funding. The success of this Community-Based Transportation Plan will depend on the willingness of the relevant lead agencies to move forward with the strategies recommended in this document to meet the needs North Central San Mateo community.