

CHAPTER 4 - TRANSPORTATION PLANS

4.1 San Mateo County Welfare-to-Work Plan (2001)

The San Mateo County Welfare-to-Work Transportation Planning Project was completed in April 2001. The Plan recommends a set of transportation strategies and implementation procedures to both improve the mobility of CalWORKs participants and other low-income individuals and connect them with employment opportunities. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in cooperation with the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA) and the San Mateo County Transit District (the District), sponsored the development of the Plan.

The study found that transportation barriers common to low-income persons in the County were:

- Cost of transit
- Lack of information about transportation options
- Low awareness and receptivity to formal carpool and vanpool programs
- Lack of assistance with low-interest car loans, car repairs and drivers licenses

Transit gaps occur with the times of day that bus service is available, the amount of time riders must wait between buses, and the geographical coverage of service. Transit gaps that are specific to San Mateo County included:

- Lack of reliable transportation options for children
- Lack of affordable options for emergency transportation
- Lack of transportation options for residents of East Palo Alto
- Lack of evening and weekend transportation options in the Redwood City, San Mateo and Coastsde HSA Service Corridors

The top four priority areas recommended to develop transportation strategies were:

- Improved Information and Mobility Manager
- Emergency Transportation
- Improved Access to HSA One-Stop Centers
- Fare Assistance

Lower priority strategies were:

- Community Transit Services
- Carpool and Vanpool Incentives
- Auto Repair and Insurance Assistance Program
- Children's Transportation Program
- 24-Hour Bus Service

4.2 SamTrans Strategic Plan (2009-2013)

The SamTrans Strategic Plan, adopted in December of 2008, outlines the San Mateo County Transit District's purpose and mission. It is "a policy framework" meant to guide District investments over

the five year period from 2009 to 2013. This plan is a living document that is subject to change as the operating environment changes.

The Plan identifies six focus areas for progress: Financial Integrity, Multimodal Services, Transportation and Land Use, Customers, Business Practices, and Employees. Two of these focus areas – Multimodal Services and Transportation and Land Use – contain goals and initiatives relevant to this Community-Based Transportation Plan.

The Multimodal Services focus area discusses the need to better connect various transportation services within the County, as well as between the County and the greater Bay Area. One initiative mentioned in this focus area is to “ensure a service network that addresses the growing mobility needs of senior citizens, customers with disabilities and low-income patrons.” As the project area includes many low-income residents, this initiative is indeed relevant to the North Central CBTP.

The Transportation and Land Use focus area discusses the importance of transportation agencies’ say in land use decisions, especially in development areas, due to their effect on transportation. The focus area lists three main goals:

- Create livable corridors and community centers that enhance transportation choices
- Form partnerships to implement joint land-use and transportation investments
- Set a local and national example for linking transportation and land-use planning

The Transportation and Land Use focus area also identifies five initiatives. The most relevant of these initiatives to the North Central CBTP are:

- Develop District policy linking transit service levels with land-use densities
- Continue to build support for the Grand Boulevard Initiative vision and guiding principles which include transit-oriented development, economic investment and housing opportunities to create a livable and walkable El Camino Real corridor
- Expand the District’s Transportation-Oriented Development (TOD) program

4.3 SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan (2008 – 2017)

The SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) identifies several goals for San Mateo County public transit over the decade from 2008 to 2017. Along with these goals, the Plan names four main challenges facing public transit over this decade:

- Financial Stability: SamTrans’ highest priority over the next several years is to attain financial stability. As labor and fuel costs continue to rise, demand for transit services continues to grow. Fluctuating sales tax proceeds and limited state and federal sources for transit funding make stable public transit finances difficult. Three fare increases of 25 cents each are proposed for fiscal years 2009, 2012, and 2015.
- Bus Ridership: Overall, ridership has decreased over the last decade. However, starting in 2007, there has been an increase in ridership along with the increased gas prices. New strategies are needed in order to increase ridership further.
- Aging Population: Many of the Baby Boomers will enter retirement in the next decade, causing an increase in public transit demand.

- Land Use: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) maximizes public transit use. Such development will be highly encouraged in the coming years.

The aging population, increased Transit-Oriented Development, rising fuel prices, and other factors are expected to cause a two percent (2%) per year ridership increase beginning in 2009. According to the Plan, this increase can be supported by improvements and expansions of bus service and community-based shuttle service.

Community-based shuttles are expected to have a significant role in the future. A significant amount of funding is available to support greater shuttle coverage in the County. These current shuttle funds will grow starting in 2009 with the addition of the San Mateo County Transportation Authority shuttle funds, awarded with the reauthorization of Measure A – a half cent sales tax. More information on these funds and their effects will be discussed in future SRTPs.

4.4 San Mateo County Senior Mobility Action Plan (2006)

As many of the Baby Boomers approach retirement in the coming decade, senior mobility via public transit is becoming an increasingly important issue. The San Mateo County Senior Mobility Action Plan, created in 2006, lists three main objectives:

- Raise awareness of the issue of senior mobility in the county.
- Increase understanding of the range of effective methods that are available to help maintain senior mobility.
- Identify realistic programs and projects that can be undertaken by all types of organizations and jurisdictions.

To help realize these objectives, the Senior Mobility Action Plan Steering Committee and SamTrans identified seven mobility strategies. Three of these strategies are relevant to this Community-Based Transportation Plan:

- Community Transit Services: Local shuttles using small vehicles to serve short trips within communities.
- Community-Based Transportation Services: A community transportation network organization with public and private funding that would provide services to seniors who cannot drive or use transit.
- Walking: Improvements to sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and driver awareness that focus on neighborhoods with a high concentration of seniors and walkable destinations. Although the project area does not have a high concentration of seniors, it does have many walkable destinations, as it is within walking distance of Downtown San Mateo.

4.5 San Mateo County Human Services Agency Transportation Programs

The Human Service Agency (HSA) in San Mateo County is currently able to provide a limited amount of bus passes, bus tickets and emergency taxi vouchers to participating CalWORKs clients who need transportation assistance. HSA was recently awarded a Lifeline Transportation grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to increase the availability of bus passes and taxi

vouchers available to clients. HSA also occasionally refers clients to the Family Loan Program run by the Family Service Agency, which can assist needy families in obtaining auto loans.

The Samaritan House Client Services Center, a branch of HSA services, is located at 4031 Pacific Boulevard in San Mateo, one block from El Camino Real. At this location, San Mateo County residents can apply for assistance and, if they qualify, receive a free monthly bus pass.

Traveling from the project area to the Client Services Center via public transit is not easy; residents have no choice but to take two buses. Coming from Delaware Street, residents can take SamTrans Route 292 to the corner of Hillsdale Boulevard and Curtis Street, and then take SamTrans Express Route KX to the corner of El Camino Real and 41st Avenue, two blocks from the Center. This trip takes approximately 27 minutes, and costs \$3.50. Coming from Humboldt Street, residents can take SamTrans Route 250 to the corner of Hillsdale Boulevard and El Camino Real, and then take SamTrans Route 390 or 391 to El Camino Real and 41st Avenue, two blocks from the Center. This trip takes approximately 46 minutes, and costs \$3.50. The return trip must also be completed using two buses, making the round-trip cost a total of \$7.00.