

Palo Alto Community Transit Study Workshop I Summary Minutes

Tuesday, October 23, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

Jordan Middle School
Dance Studio
750 N California Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Workshop Attendees: 14

Media Present: none

Elected Officials Present: Yoriko Kishimoto, City of Palo Alto Mayor

Project Team Staff Present:

VTA: Kevin Connolly, Bill Capps, Kermit Cuff, Ying Smith, Jody Littlehales, Gail Collins, Steve Fisher, Ann Carey

City of Palo Alto: Gayle Likens

Stanford University: Brodie Hamilton, Angus Davol

Consultants: Andrew Tang (Cambridge Systematics); Jeffrey Nelson, Jessica ter Schure (Nelson\Nygaard)

Meeting Summary

- Palo Alto Mayor Yoriko Kishimoto opened the workshop with some background information on transit and land use planning in Palo Alto and the importance of a successful transit network.
- Kevin Connolly, VTA, briefly presented the results of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) with focus on VTA's Palo Alto service.
- Andrew Tang, Cambridge Systematics, introduced the audience to the recently completed travel market analysis for Santa Clara County with more in-depth results for the Palo Alto service area.
- Jeffrey Tumlin, Nelson\Nygaard, discussed that the travel market analysis is a great tool for VTA to focus on the major transit generators, whereas the focus of this meeting is more on local community service in Palo Alto. Five concepts for rerouting the proposed VTA routes 88 and 89 along with potential rerouting of the Crosstown shuttle were presented.
- The presentation transitioned into a breakout group session, where participants were given the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns regarding local transit service.
- After the breakout group session, Jeffrey Tumlin summarized the workshop and informed the attendees the next steps the project team is going to take to conclude the study.

Comments from Group Sessions and General Discussions:

1. Concepts III, IV and V were somewhat preferred by the participants. No participant preferred concepts I or II.
2. A major concern is that the new route(s) must connect South Palo Alto to Gunn High School in mornings and afternoons. “For every kid not on a bus, there will be one more car.” If possible, school trips should not only run to meet bell times, but also to pick up children at after-school activities. If necessary, split route 88 to meet bell times at Gunn and with other destinations in off-peak. School trips should also be published in the timetable.
3. Several participants recommended timed transfers between shuttles, VTA, Samtrans and Marguerite. With half-hour services on many of these routes, transfers are a hassle. If there is a timed transfer between route 22 and Marguerite at California Avenue for instance, then employees in the Stanford Research Park may be more inclined to take the bus.
4. It was highly recommended that the Embarcadero shuttle is extended or rerouted to downtown Palo Alto rather than the Caltrain station.
5. Some participants were more eager to keep the local routes within Palo Alto city limits. Another participant would like to see better connections to the IKEA/Home Depot/Best Buy shopping center in East Palo Alto, and the Costco shopping center along Charleston in Mountain View.
6. One participant suggested that the proposed route 89 could be operated by Stanford as part of the Marguerite shuttle system, rather than by VTA. This would remove the fare on the route.
7. Since route 22 is terminating at the Palo Alto Caltrain station rather than in Menlo Park, VTA’s accessible service program OUTREACH does no longer cover trips to medical offices along El Camino Real in Menlo Park.
8. Group 3 developed a potential sixth concept for rerouting 88 and the Crosstown shuttle, and showed potential rerouting of the Embarcadero shuttle (to cover downtown Palo Alto).
9. Concepts I, II and III provide duplicate service to San Antonio Transit Center (since 35 goes there), which is not needed.
10. There is high demand to go to the Stanford Medical Center. Although the Marguerite provides connections to the Medical Center from the Palo Alto Transit Center, transfers are not convenient.