

Palo Alto Community Transit Study Workshop II Summary Minutes

Tuesday, November 13, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.

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

Workshop Attendees: 25

Media Present: Stanford Daily, Palo Alto Daily News

Project Team Staff Present:

VTA: Kevin Connolly, Jody Littlehales, Gail Collins, Bill Capps, Kermit Cuff, John Ristow

City of Palo Alto: Gayle Likens

Stanford University: Brodie Hamilton, Angus Davol

Consultants: Bonnie Nelson, Steve Boland (Nelson\Nygaard)

Meeting Summary

- Bonnie Nelson and Gayle Likens opened the workshop with some background information on the Community Bus Study.
- Kevin Connolly, VTA, briefly presented the results of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) with focus on VTA's Palo Alto service.
- Bonnie Nelson, Nelson\Nygaard, reviewed the original five Community Bus Study concepts and discussed three of the four concepts developed since or being carried forward for further study (I/COA, IB, V, and VI, which was discussed in general terms using N\N's School Routes map).

Comments/ Questions from General Discussion:

1. Homeless veterans need transit service between Downtown Palo Alto and the V.A.
2. Stanford has "mastered the art of" shuttle service. Why isn't the Marguerite system being expanded?
3. Any service to Gunn should not encourage students to leave before last period tutorials on Tuesdays.
4. Evening and weekend services are also needed.
5. Might it be possible to save money by reducing service when school is out?
6. In Concept IB, it might make sense to route buses down California rather than Oregon Expressway, in order to provide additional neighborhood service.
7. Would school service be free, or would a community bus fare be charged?
8. Any savings that are generated should be invested in weekend service.

9. Transit service in Palo Alto is provided by too many different operators. Combining services under a single operator would allow more efficient allocation of resources by time of day (e.g., morning commuter and school service, then buses are used for community service mid-day).
10. Concepts seem overly focused on lower-density areas that would require a cross-subsidy from riders in higher-density areas.
11. Is the point of the COA 88 actually to reduce its productivity, and thereby make it a candidate for future elimination?
12. Wouldn't the city be able to provide service more cost-effectively than VTA?
13. Focusing service on schools wouldn't just benefit students; by encourage students not to drive, it would reduce congestion.
14. Planners should remain conscious of Gunn's "open campus" policy and irregular schedules.
15. South Palo Alto might be a low-density area now, but many new and relatively high-density housing projects are planned.
16. There is a major employer, Loral Systems, on East Meadow Circle in South Palo Alto.
17. Perhaps some Route 89 service should be routed to University Avenue Caltrain, and some to California Avenue in order to better coordinate schedules with arriving trains.
18. In Concept V, Route 88 (Crosstown II) duplicates much of the alignment of not just the existing Crosstown Shuttle, but VTA Route 35.
19. A show of hands was taken: Which Caltrain station should most service connect to? Results: University Avenue 9, California 5, San Antonio 0.
20. If a Route 88 alignment like that in Concept V is chosen, with initial service to Mitchell Park, then to the future Jewish Community Center once it opens, boarding at stops along both alignments should be tracked and the alignment with more boardings made permanent.
21. The Jewish Community Center will provide shuttle services; however, it will not serve residents of the attached affordable housing.
22. Service to the JCC can be introduced after the facility opens and service in the interim can instead focus on other areas of South Palo Alto that need service, such as the Mitchel Library
23. There is a great need to serve Stanford Medical Center.
24. Another show of hands was taken: Which is more important, all-day neighborhood service or school-oriented service? Results: Schools 7, neighborhoods 5.
25. Concept V best serves Midtown.
26. The earlier comment that a focus on school service would benefit the entire community was reiterated. Gunn creates its own gridlock.
27. Moreover, if students learn how to take transit when they're young, they will grow into adult transit users, which benefits the whole society.
28. A final show of hands was taken: Should any Route 89 be routed to California or University Caltrain? Results: University 5, California 2.