



JUST MISSED IT! FIXING SAMTRANS' "CALTRAIN CONNECTION"

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ISSUE

Should SamTrans "Caltrain Connection" bus schedules be coordinated with Caltrain schedules to minimize wait times for riders transferring to and from trains during peak commute hours?

SUMMARY

Approximately 8,000 commuters travel north or south each workday from seven Caltrain train stations in San Mateo County plus Palo Alto. Of these, approximately ten percent travel between their homes and Caltrain train stations on SamTrans buses. Approximately three times as many Caltrain riders commute to Caltrain stations by car. These commuters increase vehicle traffic on local roads, which has become significantly worse over the past ten years.

SamTrans operates 16 bus lines (labeled "Caltrain Connection" on the SamTrans schedules) to and from these Caltrain stations during commute hours. The ECR (El Camino Real) bus line also transports commuters to Caltrain stations. Despite the "Caltrain Connection" designation expressed in the logo shown in SamTrans schedules, SamTrans makes no effort to coordinate these buses' Caltrain station arrival and departure times with the Caltrain train schedules.



A Grand Jury comparison of bus-train schedules during commute hours shows suboptimal wait times, defined as longer than 15 minutes or shorter than 5 minutes. For instance, in the morning commute, only 35 percent of SamTrans' "Caltrain Connection" buses are scheduled to arrive within 5 to 15 minutes of a Caltrain departure. Nineteen percent arrive with less than 5 minutes to make the transfer which, given normal delays in bus schedules, may not allow riders enough time to make the train. Twenty-six percent of buses are scheduled to arrive between 16 and 30 minutes before a Caltrain departure, and scheduled arrival times for 20 percent require riders to wait more than 30 minutes.

Better coordination of "Caltrain Connection" bus schedules with Caltrain during commute hours could make using SamTrans, rather than cars, for the trip between home and Caltrain stations more appealing to commuters. This, in turn, could increase ridership on SamTrans and decrease car traffic. Decreased wait times could also incentivize commuters living on these routes and who currently commute to work by car to try commuting on Caltrain instead.

While it should be possible to more closely align the "Caltrain Connection" schedules with the Caltrain schedule and in doing so potentially improve this commuter option, SamTrans officials state that SamTrans service is not meant to act as a feeder system to Caltrain. SamTrans coordinates bus schedules only to facilitate transfers between bus lines, not between buses and trains. Better coordination could help fulfill SamTrans' policy expressed in 2018's Measure W

sales tax increase that was passed in order to relieve traffic congestion. Point 10 of the “Core Principles of the Final Investment Plan” in Measure W is to “Incentivize transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options over driving alone.”

The Grand Jury recommends that SamTrans investigate whether it is feasible to coordinate its “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules with Caltrain train schedules. Further, together with Caltrain, SamTrans should survey existing and potential Caltrain riders to determine the level of commuter interest in improved bus service between homes and Caltrain stations that aligns bus and train schedules.

BACKGROUND

In many large urban areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York, transportation management, including bus systems, rail systems, tax fund administration, and congestion management, is concentrated under the authority of a single board of directors and the administration of a single chief executive.¹

However, in San Mateo County, due to their creation at different times and through different methods (ballot measures, intercounty agreements, assignment by regional authority), bus, rail, tax fund administration, and congestion management agencies all report to separate boards of directors. The San Mateo County Transit District Board (SamTrans) is responsible for fixed-route bus service, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) is responsible for Caltrain rail service, and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board (TA) is responsible for administering transportation funds collected from Measure A (2004) sales tax revenue. For efficiency, these agencies decided to consolidate daily operations under a single Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for executing the policies set by the Boards of Directors.²

Historically, SamTrans, the JPB, and the TA have had no mandate to reduce traffic congestion. The Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) which is responsible for local Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) assigned this responsibility to the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), which then assigned implementation of congestion management to Commute.org. Commute.org is “a public agency whose mission is to reduce the number of drive-alone vehicles traveling to, from or through San Mateo County” by “helping residents and commuters find alternatives to driving alone that are less stressful, less costly and better for the environment.”³

In 2018, voters in San Mateo County approved Measure W, a ½ cent sales tax increase projected to generate \$80 million per year to be invested in projects designed to relieve traffic congestion in San Mateo County. This measure was authored by SamTrans who will receive 50 percent of the proceeds to support operations and capital needs of SamTrans bus and paratransit service,

¹ See org charts for Los Angeles at http://media.metro.net/about_us/finance/images/fy19_org_chart.pdf and San Francisco at <https://www.sfmta.com/reports/sfmta-organization-chart>, and the structure of the New York MTA at <http://web.mta.info/mta/compliance/pdf/MTA-Creation-Structure.pdf>

² SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan – FY2017-FY2026, Page 17
<http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/Planning/2017-2026+SamTrans+Short+Range+Transit+Plan.pdf>

³ Commute.org website (<https://commute.org/aboutus>)

Caltrain rail service, and other mobility services administered by SamTrans. (The other 50 percent will be received by the TA to support countywide highway congestion improvements, local safety, pothole and congestion relief improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and regional transit connections.)⁴

The Congestion Relief Plan included in the text of and funded by Measure W reflects priorities identified through a nine-month “Get Us Moving” process. This was a collaborative program spearheaded by SamTrans and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to increase community awareness of current transportation conditions, programs, services, and solutions; help identify and prioritize transportation funding needs in the county; develop an understanding of community opinions about transportation priorities; and inform future transportation revenue opportunities and expenditures. It was a joint effort with local cities, partner agencies, and other stakeholders including regional leaders, transportation experts, employers of all sizes, non-profit groups and volunteer community members.⁵

Point 10 of the Core Principles of the Final Investment Plan of the “Get Us Moving” process, which is included in Measure W Section 1 (c), states one of the purposes of the program is to “[i]ncentivize transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options over driving alone.” Further, Section 6 (e) states that, “[i]nvestments will be designed to increase ridership, improve efficiency, and reduce congestion within the County by facilitating the creation of new services that incentivize more riders to choose public transit.”⁶

Prior to adoption of Measure W, SamTrans also issued a Business Plan, dated July 2018 (adopted September 5, 2018), which lists as one of the guiding principles/priorities, “[p]romote programs that relieve traffic congestion”.⁷

DISCUSSION

Commuters in San Mateo County have several alternatives to get to work. On average 71 percent of them commute by car alone, and another 14 percent drive with another person. Ten percent use some form of public transportation, of which 3 percent use SamTrans and the other 7 percent use some other form of public transport (BART, Caltrain, etc.).⁸

SamTrans Fixed-Route Service operates 16 bus routes that are labeled “Caltrain Connection” connecting to one of eight Caltrain stations. Most of these routes operate between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., Monday through Friday, but some also provide night and weekend service. This report

⁴ Full Text of San Mateo County Measure W (2018 Election) https://www.smcacre.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/samtransresono2018-29_076022_full_text.pdf

⁵ SamTrans website – Get Us Moving San Mateo County (http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/_Agendas+and+Minutes/SamTrans/Board+of+Directors/Presentations/2018/GUM+Update++July+2018.pdf)

⁶ *Supra*, Note 4

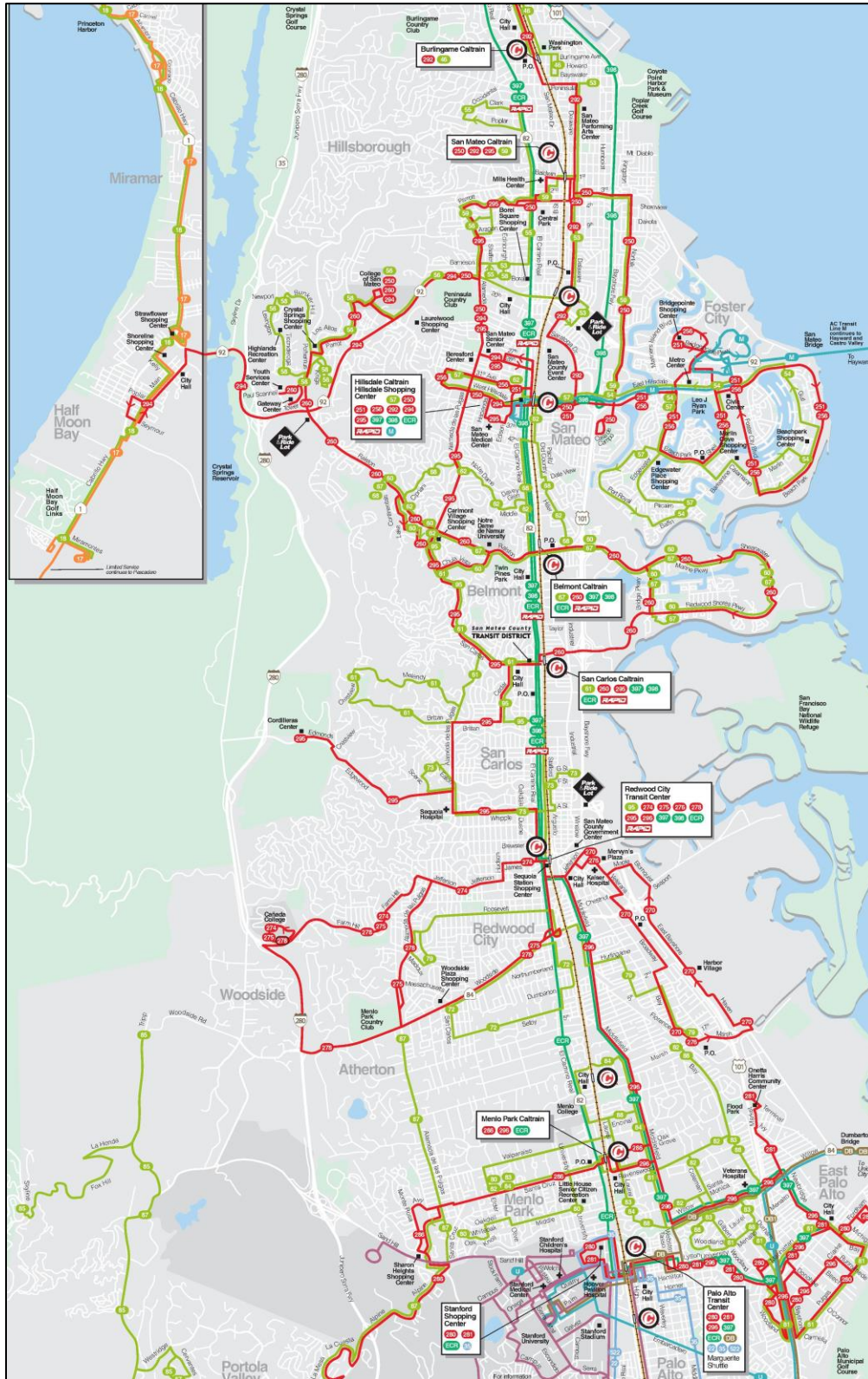
⁷ SamTrans Business Plan July 2018, approved September 5, 2018 http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/_Agendas+and+Minutes/SamTrans/Board+of+Directors/Presentations/2018/SamTrans+Business+Plan+FINAL.pdf

⁸ SamTrans Market Segmentation Study (Spring 2018), Page 15 http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/_MarketDevelopment/pdf/SamTrans+Market+Segmentation+Study+Report.pdf

only addresses operation of these routes during commute periods.⁹ The ECR (El Camino Real) Route also connects to Caltrain and BART stations along the El Camino Real corridor. The eight stations are: Burlingame, San Mateo, Hillsdale, Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, Menlo Park, and Palo Alto. Palo Alto is not in San Mateo County but is included in this discussion because it is the destination for four SamTrans “Caltrain Connection” routes and the ECR. (See Figure 1.)

⁹ For these eight Caltrain stations, the commute period runs from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in the morning and from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the evening, on weekdays.

Figure 1 – SamTrans Fixed-Route Service Routes¹⁰



¹⁰ SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan – FY2017-FY2026, Page 21
[http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/ Planning/2017-2026+SamTrans+Short+Range+Transit+Plan.pdf](http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/Planning/2017-2026+SamTrans+Short+Range+Transit+Plan.pdf)

Commuter Service Between Homes and Caltrain Stations

In San Mateo County, the primary public transportation option for the commute between home and Caltrain stations is SamTrans “Caltrain Connection” and ECR bus service. At present, these routes carry approximately 10 percent of the 8,000 commuters¹¹ who use one of the eight Caltrain stations served by SamTrans. Also, of those 8,000 commuters, approximately 45 percent currently walk and 17 percent ride a bicycle to a Caltrain station and so do not need a public transportation option. The remaining 28 percent either drive and park at the Caltrain station, or are driven to the station and dropped off there, and therefore might choose to ride SamTrans if the wait times were more convenient. (See Appendix A for further details.)

The Nonalignment Between SamTrans’ “Caltrain Connection” Bus Schedules and Caltrain Schedules

The Grand Jury analyzed the schedule alignment of all “Caltrain Connection” and ECR bus routes with Caltrain schedules during commute hours. This analysis shows that 26 percent of the morning commute bus-to-train connections require a wait time to the next train after arrival of the buses at the stations of 16 to 30 minutes and 20 percent require a wait time in excess of 30 minutes.¹² In addition, in 19 percent of cases, buses are scheduled to arrive at train stations less than 5 minutes before then next train, making the connection to that train uncertain, especially if the bus is running late. (SamTrans sets a goal of 85 percent on time performance which is defined as between zero minutes early and five minutes late \pm 30 seconds.)¹³ Only 35 percent of buses are scheduled to arrive at Caltrain stations between 5 and 15 minutes before the next train is scheduled to depart. (See Appendix B for discussion of methodology and Table B-1 for how percentages are calculated.)

Similarly, in the evening commute hours the wait time for buses after arrival of the trains is 16 to 30 minutes in 21 percent of the cases and in excess of 30 minutes 13 percent of the cases (if there is any bus scheduled at all). Also, buses are scheduled to leave less than five minutes after a train arrives in 23 percent of the cases. Thus, only 43 percent of buses are scheduled to depart Caltrain stations between 5 and 15 minutes after the previous train is scheduled to arrive. (See Appendix B, Table B-2.)

Combining morning (bus-to-train) and evening (train-to-bus) schedules as described above, in about one quarter of those instances where a longer than 15 minute wait is scheduled, the

¹¹ Caltrain Annual Passenger Count (January 2018), Attachment 6, Page 6

<http://www.caltrain.com/Assets/Marketing/pdf/2018+Annual+Passenger+Counts.pdf?v=2>

¹² The amount of wait time that is acceptable to transition from a bus to a train on a morning commute (or the reverse in the evening) is subjective. For the purposes of this discussion, the Grand Jury looked to the example of the wait times experienced by the approximately 20,000 commuters in San Mateo County who use BART to get to San Francisco each workday. According to published BART schedules (see <https://www.bart.gov/schedules/bylineresults?route=7&date=05/01/2019>), during commute hours, BART trains are scheduled to leave the Millbrae Station every 15 minutes. (At other stations in San Mateo County the time between BART trains is as little as 3 minutes.) Because of this, commuters who use SamTrans to get to BART stations never wait more than 15 minutes when BART is running to schedule. Therefore, for this report a target wait time of no more than 15 minutes has been used.

¹³ SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan – FY2017-FY2026, Page 42

<http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/Planning/2017-2026+SamTrans+Short+Range+Transit+Plan.pdf>

previous bus-to-train or train-to-bus scheduled connection is missed by less than five minutes, which can result in commuters seeing a train pull away just as their bus arrives in the morning or a bus pull away just as their train arrives in the evening. (Just missed it!) (See Appendix B, Tables B-1 and B-2.)

According to SamTrans officials, it should be possible to better align the “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules with the Caltrain schedule. However, notwithstanding the designation “Caltrain Connection,” those officials state that SamTrans buses are not meant to act as a feeder system to Caltrain.¹⁴ The designation “Caltrain Connection” refers to the fact that these routes provide connection to Caltrain stations, not that the buses connect to Caltrain trains.¹⁵ This is particularly interesting since SamTrans, along with Caltrain and various city governments, does contract with Commute.org to manage 20 shuttle routes that travel between various BART/Caltrain stations and certain work locations in San Mateo County,¹⁶ the schedules of which are oriented toward picking up from specific trains in the morning and meeting specific trains in the evening.¹⁷ Also, in concert with Caltrain, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (MUNI) operates the 81X, 82X, and 83X bus lines, whose schedules are also arranged to meet trains in the morning and the evening.¹⁸

An Example of How SamTrans-Caltrain Schedule Coordination Could be Achieved

In order to test the possibility of modifying “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules to meet trains more often, the Grand Jury examined as an example the schedule of one selected “Caltrain Connection” bus Route, the 275 in Redwood City. This analysis focused on the scheduled wait time between buses and trains in the morning and between trains and buses in the evening. For each morning train, the bus arrival times at the Redwood City Train Station were reviewed to find the bus that has the shortest wait time to the train departure time. Conversely, for each evening train, the bus departure times from the Redwood City Train Station were reviewed to find the bus that has the shortest wait time from the train arrival time.

Table 1 shows the current schedule for bus Route 275, mapped against the corresponding Caltrain schedule. It shows that only one of the 18 bus-train connections that occur each day for northbound (toward San Francisco) morning commuters at the Redwood City Transit Center at Sequoia Station (the “Redwood City Station”) and for southbound (toward the Redwood City Station) evening commuters is aligned with the Caltrain schedule (i.e., for the northbound morning commute to work, the bus arrives between 5 and 15 minutes before the train departs and for the southbound evening return commute to home, the bus departs from the Redwood City Station between 5 and 15 minutes after the train arrives). Importantly, Table 1 shows that the current Route 275 schedule does not align with two of the three “Baby Bullet”¹⁹ northbound

¹⁴ Grand Jury interviews.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Grand Jury interview.

¹⁷ Commute.org Shuttle Schedules, <https://commute.org/shuttles>

¹⁸ San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency Trip Planner, <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/muni/routes-stops>

¹⁹ Caltrain operates three types of train schedules; a) Local trains that stop at every station, b) Express trains that only stop at selected stations, and c) “Baby Bullet” trains that stop at only four to six stations between San Jose and San Francisco and have the ability to pass other trains using special bypass tracks at certain locations.

express trains to San Francisco in the morning or any of the three southbound Baby Bullet express trains returning to Redwood City Station in the evening.

For commuters leaving from Redwood City Station to go southbound (toward San Jose) in the morning and returning on northbound evening trains, the situation is somewhat better in that two of the three southbound morning commute Baby Bullet express train connections can be made within the 5 to 15-minute window and three of the five returning northbound (to Redwood City Station) Baby Bullet express train connections in the evening fit this parameter. But overall, of the 22 bus-train connections that occur each day for southbound morning commuters and returning northbound evening commuters, only seven can be made within this specified window.

Table 2 (below) reflects an alternative schedule for Route 275 developed by the Grand Jury based on trying to get commuters to the trains within the 5 to 15-minute window by changing the bus arrival times by only a few minutes and increasing the utilization of idle buses (see Appendix C). The results of this exercise show that if the alternate schedule were to be used for the northbound (San Francisco) morning commute and returning southbound (Redwood City Station) evening commute, 14 of 18 connections could be made with appropriate leeway, including all of the express trains. For the southbound (San Jose) morning commute and returning northbound (Redwood City Station) evening commute, 16 of 22 connections could be made with appropriate leeway, including eight of the nine express train connections. This alternate schedule (Table 2) does not require any additional buses or operators.

This exercise demonstrates that better SamTrans/Caltrain schedule coordination is possible. Whether this leads to an increase in bus ridership and a reduction in congestion is unknown. The next section discusses the possible impacts and limitations of such changes.

Route 275 - Caltrain Connection (Current Schedule)

		Northbound Morning Trains						Southbound Morning Trains											
		Train Departure Times						Train Departure Times											
		Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local				
Bus Arrives	RWC Station	6:32 AM	6:47 AM	7:32 AM	7:47 AM	8:00 AM	8:34 AM	8:51 AM	8:57 AM	7:11 AM	7:23 AM	7:31 AM	8:06 AM	8:11 AM	8:23 AM	8:31 AM	9:06 AM	9:11 AM	9:23 AM
Scheduled Wait Time - Bus to Train																			
6:14 AM		18 min																	
6:28 AM		4 min	19 min	31 min															
7:01 AM		(29) min*	(14) min*	(2) min*	31 min														
7:32 AM			0 min	15 min	28 min														
8:05 AM				(33) min*	(18) min*	(5) min*	29 min												
8:34 AM					0 min	17 min	23 min												
9:03 AM					(29) min*	(12) min*	(6) min*												
9:31 AM																			
10:01 AM																			

		Northbound Evening Trains						Southbound Evening Trains												
		Train Departure Times						Train Departure Times												
		Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local					
Bus Leaves	RWC Station	4:40 PM	4:53 PM	5:11 PM	5:29 PM	5:36 PM	5:49 PM	6:11 PM	6:29 PM	6:36 PM	6:49 PM	7:20 PM	5:08 PM	5:28 PM	5:33 PM	6:08 PM	6:33 PM	6:38 PM	7:08 PM	7:33 PM
Scheduled Wait Time - Train to Bus																				
4:30 PM		(10) min*	(23) min*																	
5:00 PM		20 min	7 min	(11) min*	(29) min*															
5:30 PM				19 min	1 min	(6) min*	(19) min*													
6:00 PM					31 min	24 min	11 min	(11) min*	(29) min*											
6:30 PM								19 min	1 min	(6) min*	(19) min*									
7:00 PM									31 min	24 min	11 min	(11) min*	(29) min*							

Note: Connections with wait times of 5 to 15 minutes to catch train/bus shown in Green
 Note: Connections with wait times <5 minutes or >15 minutes to catch train/bus shown in Red
 * Negative wait times denote number of minutes by which next morning bus misses train or previous evening bus misses train

Table 1 - Current Schedule

Route 275 - Caltrain Connection (Alternate Schedule)

Southbound Morning Trains										
Train Departure Times										
	Express	Express	Bullet	Local	Bullet	Express	Bullet	Local	Bullet	Express
	6:44 AM	7:06 AM	7:11 AM	7:23 AM	7:31 AM	8:06 AM	8:11 AM	8:23 AM	8:31 AM	9:06 AM
Bus Arrives										
RWC Station										
6:19 AM										
6:43 AM			16 min							
6:50 AM			(6) min*							
7:18 AM			(12) min*							
7:25 AM			(7) min*							
7:53 AM			(2) min*							
7:58 AM										
8:24 AM										
8:44 AM										
8:58 AM										
9:18 AM										

Northbound Morning Trains									
Train Departure Times									
	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local
	6:32 AM	6:47 AM	6:59 AM	7:32 AM	7:47 AM	8:00 AM	8:34 AM	8:51 AM	8:57 AM
Bus Arrives									
RWC Station									
6:19 AM									
6:43 AM									
6:50 AM									
7:18 AM									
7:25 AM									
7:53 AM									
7:58 AM									
8:24 AM									
8:44 AM									
8:58 AM									
9:18 AM									

Northbound Evening Trains									
Train Departure Times									
	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express
	4:40 PM	4:53 PM	5:11 PM	5:29 PM	5:36 PM	5:49 PM	6:11 PM	6:29 PM	6:36 PM
Bus Leaves									
RWC Station									
4:45 PM									
4:58 PM									
5:19 PM									
5:40 PM									
5:54 PM									
6:19 PM									
6:40 PM									
6:54 PM									
7:13 PM									

Southbound Evening Trains									
Train Departure Times									
	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local	Bullet	Express	Local
	5:08 PM	5:28 PM	5:33 PM	6:08 PM	6:28 PM	6:33 PM	7:08 PM	7:28 PM	7:33 PM
Bus Leaves									
RWC Station									
4:45 PM									
4:58 PM									
5:19 PM									
5:40 PM									
5:54 PM									
6:19 PM									
6:40 PM									
6:54 PM									
7:13 PM									



Note: Connections with wait times of 5 to 15 minutes to catch train/bus shown in Green
 Note: Connections with wait times <5 minutes or >15 minutes to catch train/bus shown in Red
 * Negative wait times denote number of minutes by which next morning bus arrives after the train or previous evening bus leaves before the train

Table 2 – Alternate Schedule

Potential Obstacles to Coordinating Caltrain and SamTrans Buses

In developing Fixed-Route Bus schedules, SamTrans reviews the needs and goals of each route. In the case of certain transit centers, such as the Redwood City Transit Center located at Sequoia Station, bus schedules are timed to make transfer from bus-to-bus easier. This is accomplished by setting the times that all buses leave the station to a consistent time each hour known as a “pulse time”. Bus-to-train transfer is not currently a key parameter, as SamTrans assumes there is always a train coming. However, the Grand Jury finds that changing bus schedules to align with train schedules should not affect the bus transfers at a pulse point of this type, because the pulse point could be shifted to the train arrival/departure time for *all* of the bus routes. The pulse times would simply not necessarily be on the hour, quarter hour, or half hour.

SamTrans advised the Grand Jury that it is not supposed to compete with or replace school bus service. However, school bell times are a parameter in developing these schedules for only one commuter bus run in the morning and one in the afternoon.²⁰

Can this Improve Local Traffic Congestion?

According to the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) of San Mateo County, with the increasing population in San Mateo County the number of drive-alone vehicles has increased traffic congestion not only on major freeways but on local roads such as El Camino Real (State Hwy 82), Woodside Road (State Hwy 84), Willow Road (State Hwy 114), and University Avenue in East Palo Alto (State Hwy 109). The level of service (LOS) during commute hours for all of these local road segments and intersections is now rated “LOS E.” This means “unstable traffic flow and rapidly fluctuating speeds and flow rates, low maneuverability and low driver comfort, significant delays, and poor service.”²¹

As shown in Appendix A, approximately 28 percent of commuters who travel by Caltrain either drive and park, are dropped off, or use a taxi service to get to the train station.²² Each of these contributes to traffic congestion on local roads. With the electrification of Caltrain by 2022, which is planned to increase capacity by over 30 percent, this contribution to local traffic congestion will only get worse.

Would the Improvement in Schedule Alignment Increase SamTrans Ridership?

In the 1970’s Switzerland instituted a pulse system known as *Taktfahrplan* in which public transit vehicles “arrive at a station at about the same time, passengers transfer between vehicles and the vehicles leave.” “Since 1970, the annual number of [public transit] passenger-kilometers traveled has increased by 113 percent, compared to only 30 percent in the European Union as a whole.”²³

²⁰ Grand Jury interviews.

²¹ San Mateo County Congestion Management Program 2017, Page 20, <http://ccag.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-CMP-Draft-v2.pdf>

²² The Caltrain Corridor Vision Plan, SPUR Report, February 2017, Page 20
https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/publications_pdfs/SPUR_Caltrain_Corridor_Vision_Plan.pdf

²³ Ibid.

In deciding what method to use, commuters evaluate the various alternatives as to reliability, cost, and time to commute. The SamTrans Market Segmentation Study from Spring 2018 shows that non-Riders and former riders were most concerned with the time SamTrans would take to reach their destination, with two-thirds agreeing with the statement, “SamTrans would take too long to reach my destination.”²⁴ These statements may apply to combined SamTrans-Caltrain commuting. However, it is not possible to say for sure, since such questions have not been included in SamTrans surveys.

FINDINGS

- F1. Under SamTrans’ current “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules for the morning weekday commute, only 35 percent of buses are scheduled to arrive at Caltrain stations between 5 and 15 minutes before the next train is scheduled to depart.
- F2. Under SamTrans’ current “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules for the evening weekday commute, only 43 percent of buses are scheduled to depart Caltrain stations between 5 and 15 minutes after the previous train is scheduled to arrive.
- F3. SamTrans could set its “Caltrain Connection” bus schedule arrival times at Caltrain stations to increase the numbers of buses that arrive at train stations between 5 and 15 minutes before the next train departs.
- F4. SamTrans has not studied the feasibility or desirability of setting “Caltrain Connection” bus schedule times to facilitate transfers between these buses and Caltrain trains, nor the extent of commuter demand for better coordinating these bus and train schedules.
- F5. Caltrain has not studied the extent of train commuter demand for better coordinating “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules with train schedules so as to facilitate their using SamTrans for commuting between home and the Caltrain station.
- F6. While coordinating SamTrans fixed-route bus schedules with Caltrain train schedules for service between home and Caltrain stations could attract current Caltrain riders who now travel from home by car and park at Caltrain stations, no data has been collected by SamTrans or Caltrain to support this hypothesis.
- F7. Before 2018, SamTrans did not identify reduction of traffic congestion as one of its objectives.
- F8. Within the text of the recently passed Measure W, which was authored by SamTrans and will be carried out by SamTrans and the TA, the included Congestion Relief Plan states that SamTrans will “[i]ncentivize transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options over driving alone” and that “[i]nvestments will be designed to increase ridership, improve efficiency, and reduce congestion within the County by facilitating the creation of new services that incentivize more riders to choose public transit.”

²⁴ SamTrans, Market Segmentation Study – Summary Report, Spring 2018
<http://www.samtrans.com/Assets/MarketDevelopment/pdf/SamTrans+Market+Segmentation+Study+Report.pdf>

F9. SamTrans officials state that “Caltrain Connection” routes are not a feeder service to Caltrain. The designation “Caltrain Connection” refers to the fact that these routes provide connection to Caltrain stations, not that the buses connect to Caltrain trains.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. SamTrans should study the feasibility of coordinating “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules with existing Caltrain train schedules to facilitate bus/train transfers and minimize wait times. The SamTrans Board of Directors should consider the results of that study at a public hearing by June 30, 2020.
- R2. SamTrans should perform marketing research on existing and potential riders of “Caltrain Connection” buses, including those who use Caltrain, to determine their interest in coordinating “Caltrain Connection” bus schedules with existing Caltrain schedules. The SamTrans Board of Directors should consider the results of that survey at a public hearing by June 30, 2020.
- R3. Caltrain should survey existing riders of Caltrain trains in San Mateo County, including those who use SamTrans, to determine their interest in coordinating “Caltrain Connection” bus schedule arrival times at Caltrain stations with existing Caltrain schedules. The Caltrain Board of Directors should consider the results of that study at a public hearing by June 30, 2020.
- R4. The Boards of Directors of SamTrans and Caltrain should discuss together the value and feasibility of using “Caltrain Connection” buses as a feeder system to Caltrain to reduce traffic congestion. This should be undertaken by December 31, 2019.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) to respond to the foregoing Findings and Recommendations (R1, R2 and R4), referring in each instance to the number thereof.
- Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) to respond to the foregoing Findings and Recommendations (R3 and R4), referring in each instance to the number thereof.

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

METHODOLOGY

Documents

- In investigating coordination of SamTrans “Caltrain Connection” Service and Caltrain schedules the Grand Jury reviewed publicly available documents, reports, schedules, and websites from SamTrans, Caltrain, C/CAG, BART, and the US Census. The bibliography contains a full list of these documents.

Interviews

- The Grand Jury interviewed six persons within SamTrans, Caltrain, and Commute.org.

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APPENDIX A

SamTrans Drop Off to/Pick Up from Caltrain Data

There is no survey data available on the number of Caltrain commuters who use SamTrans to get to/from Caltrain stations. In 2014, as part of a report to the Metropolitan Transit District (MTC), Caltrain performed an on-board survey that included information on how all of their riders get to and from individual Caltrain stations.²⁵ Table A1 shows the percentage data from that survey for the eight Caltrain stations included in this analysis in the third through ninth columns.

Station	Total (People)	Park & Ride (%)	Drop Off (%)	Taxi (%)	Bike (%)	Transit (%)	Walk (%)	Other (%)
Burlingame	493	2.0	13.0	1.0	17.0	7.0	60.0	0.0
San Mateo	937	7.0	15.0	2.0	17.0	4.0	54.0	1.0
Hillsdale	1,507	18.0	15.0	2.0	15.0	8.0	41.0	1.0
Belmont	247	10.0	15.0	4.0	15.0	7.0	49.0	0.0
San Carlos	596	14.0	19.0	1.0	15.0	6.0	46.0	0.0
Redwood City	1,086	8.0	20.0	2.0	18.0	10.0	43.0	0.0
Menlo Park	485	4.0	20.0	3.0	21.0	11.0	39.0	1.0
Palo Alto	1,066	4.0	15.0	2.0	20.0	23.0	36.0	0.0
Total/Wt Avg	6,417	9.4	16.4	2.0	17.2	10.2	44.5	0.5

Table A1 – How Caltrain Riders Get To and From Caltrain Stations (2014)

Caltrain also performs an annual survey of how many people embark and disembark trains at each station during peak commute hours.²⁶ Using the values for each station from the 2014 Annual Count during morning weekday peak period (second column of Table A1), the weighted averages from the percentage values in Table A1 indicate that approximately 45 percent of Caltrain riders walk to these stations, approximately 17 percent ride bikes, and approximately 28 percent either drive and park, are dropped off, or use a taxi service.

Table A1 shows that approximately 10 percent of Caltrain commuters get on or off at these stations using “Transit” for their connection to home. That establishes (as of 2014) the maximum possible percentage of Caltrain commuters who connect to Caltrain using SamTrans. SamTrans data from 2018, summarized in Table A2, is consistent with this 10 percent, showing that the total numbers of bus passengers getting on or off SamTrans buses at the 8 Caltrain stations during peak commute hours equaled approximately 9 percent of the total numbers of Caltrain commuters getting on or off trains at these same stops.

²⁵ The Caltrain Corridor Vision Plan, SPUR Report, February 2017, Page 35

https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/publications_pdfs/SPUR_Caltrain_Corridor_Vision_Plan.pdf

²⁶ Peak trains are those trains departing the San Francisco or San Jose Diridon stations between 4:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 2:59 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

SamTrans Passenger AM Drop Off to and PM Pick Up from Caltrain

Daily Averages during Work Day Peak Periods***

(SamTrans Data is Average Daily Figures from July, August & September 2018)

Bus Route	Palo Alto**		Menlo Park		Redwood City		San Carlos		Belmont		Hillsdale		San Mateo		Burlingame		Totals	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
250											33.5	44.7	18.5	21.2			52.0	65.9
251											0.0	9.2					0.0	9.2
256											14.8	3.5					14.8	3.5
260							11.8	6.5	15.9	15.5							27.7	22.0
270			8.9	13.3													8.9	13.3
274			16.7	23.2													16.7	23.2
275			41.4	26.2													41.4	26.2
276			12.4	7.0													12.4	7.0
280	21.2	6.4															21.2	6.4
281	44.8	28.0															44.8	28.0
286																	4.9	0.9
292											34.0	27.7	13.7	9.9	8.8	7.0	56.5	44.5
294											3.5	10.9					3.5	10.9
295			3.7	5.1			3.3	1.9			5.7	9.5	2.3	1.9			15.0	18.3
296			70.6	83.7													105.9	119.3
398			7.6	13.9			3.1	3.8	4.4	4.8	3.7	3.8					18.8	26.4
ECR	99.8	70.3	23.7	23.9	60.6	86.8	34.5	33.4	26.8	31.0	57.9	83.9					303.3	329.4
Bus Grand Total	165.7	104.6	221.9	259.2	52.7	45.6	52.7	45.6	47.1	51.3	153.2	193.2	34.5	33.0	8.8	7.0	747.8	754.2
Caltrain Total *	1217.0	1302.0	1709.0	1563.0	660.0	647.0	660.0	647.0	312.0	279.0	1906.0	1893.0	1350.0	1321.0	708.0	680.0	8419.0	8223.0
Bus/Train All Routes	14%	8%	13%	17%	8%	7%	8%	7%	15%	18%	8%	10%	3%	2%	1%	1%	9%	9%

* Figures taken from Caltrain 2018 Annual Passenger Counts from January 2018

** Palo Alto Bus/Train results estimate low because some of these passengers come via VTA bus routes and Marguerite Shuttle

*** In the case of morning arrivals, the bus disembarkment data from approximately 15 minutes before the first train and 15 minutes after the last train during the peak Caltrain period were included. In the case of evening departures, the bus embarkment data from approximately 15 minutes before the first train and 15 minutes after the last train during the peak Caltrain period were used to take into account daily deviations in train and bus arrival and departure times.

Table A2

APPENDIX B

Current Bus/Train Wait Times

The Grand Jury correlated the schedules of 16 SamTrans bus routes that are labelled “Caltrain Connection” plus the El Camino Real (ECR) bus route with the scheduled arrival or departure time of all Caltrain trains at the 8 Caltrain Stations where these bus routes drop off and pick up passengers. This review identified 714 bus/train connections in the peak morning commute period and 759 train/bus connections in the peak evening commute period. (Connections where there is currently no bus scheduled early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening to meet a scheduled train are not included in these counts.)

For each of these connections, the Grand Jury determined the minimum scheduled time that a commuter would wait for a train in the morning or wait for a bus in the evening. These statistics are summarized in Tables B1 and B2 for morning and evening respectively. Combining the results from both tables shows that in approximately 24 percent of the connections between Caltrain and SamTrans buses during commute times, scheduled wait times to board the connecting train or bus is 16 to 30 minutes and in another 16 percent of these connections, scheduled wait times exceed 30 minutes. Also, in about a quarter of those instances when scheduled wait time exceeds 15 minutes, the previous bus or train is scheduled to depart less than 5 minutes before the commuter’s arrival. And in the case of approximately 21 percent of the connections, fewer than 5 minutes are available to make the connection, putting commuters at risk of missing their connection if the train or bus delivering them to their connection is running just a few minutes behind schedule.

**Morning Commute Time
Bus/Train Connection Scheduled Performance**

Station	North						South						Total						
	Total Connections	< 5 Min Wait	5 to 15 Min Wait	16 to 30 Min Wait	>30 Min Wait	Prev Bus < 5 Min*	Total Connections	< 5 Min Wait	5 to 15 Min Wait	16 to 30 Min Wait	>30 Min Wait	Prev Bus < 5 Min*	Total Connections	< 5 Min Wait	5 to 15 Min Wait	16 to 30 Min Wait	>30 Min Wait	Prev Bus < 5 Min*	
Palo Alto	53	9	20	10	14	6	65	3	28	15	19	11	118	12	48	25	33	17	
Menlo Park	28	6	13	9	0	3	38	11	16	9	2	5	66	17	29	18	2	8	
RWC	75	16	25	19	15	8	96	21	30	25	20	7	171	37	55	44	35	15	
San Carlos	30	4	15	7	4	1	47	12	17	9	9	3	77	16	32	16	13	4	
Belmont	15	5	4	2	4	4	15	5	4	4	2	0	30	10	8	6	6	4	
Hillsdale	100	19	36	23	22	7	73	11	23	20	19	7	173	30	59	43	41	14	
San Mateo	29	5	7	13	4	5	28	5	7	12	4	4	57	10	14	25	8	9	
Burlingame	10	0	5	4	1	0	12	1	3	6	2	2	22	1	8	10	3	2	
TOTAL	340	64	125	87	64	34	374	69	128	100	77	39	714	133	253	187	141	73	
Percentage of Total														19%	35%	26%	20%	10%	
Percentage of >15 minutes																			22%

Note: Connections do not include bus/train interactions where there is currently no bus scheduled early enough to meet the train.

* Connections where a bus is scheduled to arrive less than 5 minutes before a train departs resulting in a wait > 15 minutes.

Table B1 – Summary of Peak Morning Commute Wait Times

**Evening Commute Time
Train/Bus Connection Scheduled Performance**

Station	South						North						Total						
	Total Connections	< 5 Min Wait	5 to 15 Min Wait	16 to 30 Min Wait	>30 Min Wait	Prev Bus < 5 Min*	Total Connections	< 5 Min Wait	5 to 15 Min Wait	16 to 30 Min Wait	>30 Min Wait	Prev Bus < 5 Min*	Total Connections	< 5 Min Wait	5 to 15 Min Wait	16 to 30 Min Wait	>30 Min Wait	Prev Bus < 5 Min*	
Palo Alto	60	12	23	15	10	8	70	11	34	11	14	6	130	23	57	26	24	14	
Menlo Park	26	7	17	2	0	2	40	13	20	5	2	5	66	20	37	7	2	7	
RWC	66	18	27	18	3	11	89	27	34	21	7	7	155	45	61	39	10	18	
San Carlos	36	4	23	6	3	2	55	19	21	10	5	5	91	23	44	16	8	7	
Belmont	13	6	2	4	1	3	14	3	7	4	0	2	27	9	9	8	1	5	
Hillsdale	114	25	43	21	25	6	85	14	37	15	19	2	199	39	80	36	44	8	
San Mateo	33	6	11	12	4	2	32	3	14	12	3	5	65	9	25	24	7	7	
Burlingame	12	4	2	4	2	2	14	2	8	3	1	1	26	6	10	7	3	3	
TOTAL	360	82	148	82	48	36	399	92	175	81	51	33	759	174	323	163	99	69	
Percentage of Total														23%	43%	21%	13%	9%	
Percentage of >15 minutes																			26%

Note: Connections do not include bus/train interactions where there is currently no bus scheduled late enough to meet the train.

* Connections where a bus is scheduled to leave less than 5 minutes before a train arrives resulting in a wait > 15 minutes.

Table B2 – Summary of Peak Evening Commute Wait Times

APPENDIX C

Route 275 Current and Alternate Bus Schedules

The current schedule for SamTrans Bus Route 275²⁷ is shown on the left side of Table C-1, including extra columns for the bus wait time at the Redwood City Train Station and the far point of the route at Woodside Road and Alameda de las Pulgas Ave. Note that the departure times for leaving the Redwood City Train Station are arbitrarily set at half hour increments on the half hour. As part of the Grand Jury’s analysis, an alternate schedule was developed by adjusting the bus wait times and removing the requirement that departure time from the Redwood City Train Station be on the half hour. The Grand Jury finds that this example demonstrates the practicability of an alternate schedule in this case that does not require additional buses or personnel. The alternate schedule simply increases the frequency at which buses traverse the route during commute hours.

Route 275 - Caltrain Connection

Current Schedule

Leave RWC Train Station	Arrive Woodside/ Alameda	Wait Woodside/ Alameda	Leave Woodside/ Alameda	Arrive RWC Train Station	Wait RWC Train Station
			6:00 AM	6:14 AM	16 min
6:00 AM	6:14 AM	0 min	6:14 AM	6:28 AM	32 min
6:30 AM	6:45 AM	0 min	6:45 AM	7:01 AM	29 min
7:00 AM	7:16 AM	0 min	7:16 AM	7:32 AM	28 min
7:30 AM	7:48 AM	0 min	7:48 AM	8:05 AM	25 min
8:00 AM	8:18 AM	0 min	8:18 AM	8:34 AM	26 min
8:30 AM	8:46 AM	0 min	8:46 AM	9:03 AM	27 min
9:00 AM	9:15 AM	0 min	9:15 AM	9:31 AM	29 min
9:30 AM	9:45 AM	0 min	9:45 AM	10:01 AM	29 min
10:00 AM	10:14 AM	0 min	10:14 AM	10:30 AM	30 min
10:30 AM	10:44 AM	0 min	10:44 AM	11:00 AM	30 min
11:00 AM	11:14 AM	0 min	11:14 AM	11:30 AM	30 min
11:30 AM	11:44 AM	0 min	11:44 AM	12:00 PM	30 min
12:00 PM	12:14 PM	0 min	12:14 PM	12:30 PM	30 min
12:30 PM	12:44 PM	0 min	12:44 PM	1:00 PM	30 min
1:00 PM	1:14 PM	0 min	1:14 PM	1:30 PM	30 min
1:30 PM	1:45 PM	0 min	1:45 PM	2:01 PM	29 min
2:00 PM	2:15 PM	0 min	2:15 PM	2:31 PM	29 min
2:30 PM	2:45 PM	0 min	2:45 PM	3:01 PM	29 min
3:00 PM	3:16 PM	0 min	3:16 PM	3:32 PM	28 min
3:30 PM	3:46 PM	0 min	3:46 PM	4:03 PM	27 min
4:00 PM	4:16 PM	0 min	4:16 PM	4:33 PM	27 min
4:30 PM	4:47 PM	0 min	4:47 PM	5:04 PM	26 min
5:00 PM	5:17 PM	0 min	5:17 PM	5:34 PM	26 min
5:30 PM	5:47 PM	0 min	5:47 PM	6:04 PM	26 min
6:00 PM	6:14 PM	0 min	6:14 PM	6:31 PM	29 min
6:30 PM	6:44 PM	0 min	6:44 PM	7:01 PM	
7:00 PM	7:14 PM				

Alternate Schedule

Leave RWC Train Station	Arrive Woodside/ Alameda	Wait Woodside/ Alameda	Leave Woodside/ Alameda	Arrive RWC Train Station	Wait RWC Train Station
			6:05 AM	6:19 AM	0 min
6:15 AM	6:29 AM	0 min	6:29 AM	6:43 AM	2 min
6:19 AM	6:34 AM	(0) min	6:34 AM	6:50 AM	0 min
6:45 AM	7:01 AM	1 min	7:02 AM	7:18 AM	0 min
6:50 AM	7:08 AM	0 min	7:08 AM	7:25 AM	0 min
7:18 AM	7:36 AM	1 min	7:37 AM	7:53 AM	0 min
7:25 AM	7:41 AM	(0) min	7:41 AM	7:58 AM	2 min
7:53 AM	8:08 AM	0 min	8:08 AM	8:24 AM	0 min
8:00 AM	8:15 AM	13 min	8:28 AM	8:44 AM	4 min
8:24 AM	8:38 AM	4 min	8:42 AM	8:58 AM	32 min
8:48 AM	9:02 AM	0 min	9:02 AM	9:18 AM	42 min
9:30 AM	9:44 AM	0 min	9:44 AM	10:00 AM	30 min
10:00 AM	10:14 AM	0 min	10:14 AM	10:30 AM	30 min
10:30 AM	10:44 AM	0 min	10:44 AM	11:00 AM	30 min
11:00 AM	11:14 AM	0 min	11:14 AM	11:30 AM	30 min
11:30 AM	11:44 AM	0 min	11:44 AM	12:00 PM	30 min
12:00 PM	12:14 PM	0 min	12:14 PM	12:30 PM	30 min
12:30 PM	12:44 PM	0 min	12:44 PM	1:00 PM	30 min
1:00 PM	1:14 PM	0 min	1:14 PM	1:30 PM	30 min
1:30 PM	1:45 PM	0 min	1:45 PM	2:01 PM	29 min
2:00 PM	2:15 PM	0 min	2:15 PM	2:31 PM	29 min
2:30 PM	2:45 PM	0 min	2:45 PM	3:01 PM	29 min
3:00 PM	3:16 PM	0 min	3:16 PM	3:32 PM	28 min
3:30 PM	3:46 PM	0 min	3:46 PM	4:03 PM	27 min
4:00 PM	4:16 PM	0 min	4:16 PM	4:33 PM	27 min
4:30 PM	4:47 PM	0 min	4:47 PM	5:04 PM	26 min
5:00 PM	5:17 PM	0 min	5:17 PM	5:34 PM	26 min
5:30 PM	5:47 PM	0 min	5:47 PM	6:04 PM	26 min
6:00 PM	6:14 PM	0 min	6:14 PM	6:31 PM	29 min
6:30 PM	6:44 PM	0 min	6:44 PM	7:01 PM	
7:00 PM	7:14 PM				
6:19 PM	6:33 PM	0 min	6:33 PM	6:50 PM	4 min
6:40 PM	6:54 PM	0 min	6:54 PM	7:11 PM	2 min
6:54 PM	7:08 PM	1 min	7:09 PM	7:26 PM	
7:13 PM	7:27 PM				

Note: Route requires two buses. One has times shown on blue lines and the other has times shown on white lines.

Table C1 – Route 275 Bus Schedule

Issued: July 11, 2019

²⁷ SamTrans Bus Route 275 Schedule, <http://www.samtrans.com/schedulesandmaps/timetables/275.html>



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 9, 2019

Honorable Donald J. Ayoob
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Ayoob:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB). This letter will serve as the JPB's formal response to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury's July 11, 2019 report entitled "Just Missed It! Fixing SamTrans' 'Caltrain Connections.'" The JPB's Board of Directors reviewed and approved (on October 3, 2019) this response to the Grand Jury report's nine findings (numbered F1-F9) and two of the Grand Jury's four recommendations (R3 and R4).

For context, it is important to note that the JPB, a three-county joint powers authority, operates Caltrain in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties along a rail corridor passing through 19 cities. Caltrain connects not only with SamTrans buses operated by the San Mateo County Transit District (District), but also with services of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, as well as the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Capitol Corridor and other means of public transportation, including shuttle programs operated by a range of public, private and non-profit entities.

Findings

The JPB generally agrees with findings F1, F2 and F5. The JPB agrees with finding F6 to the extent that the finding concerns the JPB (as opposed to the District). The JPB is not in a position to agree or disagree with findings F3, F4, F7, F8 or F9.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury requested that the JPB respond to the following two recommendations:

R3: Caltrain should survey existing riders of Caltrain trains in San Mateo County, including those who use SamTrans, to determine their interest in coordinating "Caltrain Connection" bus schedule arrival times at Caltrain stations with existing Caltrain schedules. The Caltrain Board of Directors should consider the results of that study at a public hearing by June 30, 2020.

The JPB surveys its customers fairly frequently. The JPB conducts standard customer surveys every three years in accordance with federal requirements and to inform its

decision-making. The JPB also conducts surveys regarding specific areas of interest, when appropriate, e.g., a May 2018 Customer Satisfaction Survey. Most triennial and special-purpose surveys include questions on passengers' travel patterns, including origins and destinations, as well as their modes of travel getting to the train and their final destinations. Answers to these questions are used when the agency contemplates capital and operational improvements to address the first- and last-mile needs of riders throughout the Caltrain service area.

The last triennial customer survey was conducted in October 2016; the next such survey is planned for later this fall. It would not be efficient or add any particularly helpful information for the JPB to conduct a separate study just on bus services in one of the three counties where it operates.

It should be noted that the District also surveys SamTrans passengers, and we understand that the District will be evaluating service characteristics and proposing service changes as part of the SamTrans Comprehensive Operational Analysis ("COA" or "Reimagine SamTrans") that recently commenced. The COA will provide both the District and the JPB an opportunity to consider opportunities to improve their connecting services.

R4: The Boards of Directors of SamTrans and Caltrain should discuss together the value and feasibility of using "Caltrain Connection" buses as a feeder system to Caltrain to reduce traffic congestion. This should be undertaken by December 31, 2019.

The JPB and District are both engaged in major planning efforts at this time: the Caltrain Business Plan for the JPB, and Reimagine SamTrans for the District. Among the many issues being explored in the Caltrain Business Plan is the structure and predictability of Caltrain schedules, including how this structure improves coordination with the many means passengers have for accessing the train. The District is a stakeholder in the Caltrain Business Plan, and the JPB is a stakeholder in Reimagine SamTrans. Staff and the Boards of Directors of each agency will have opportunities to be informed of analysis being conducted for both plans, and to provide input, including as related to Caltrain-SamTrans connections. We do not anticipate that the Boards of Directors will hold a joint meeting to discuss connections between Caltrain and SamTrans, which is just one of the many providers of transportation services providing connections to Caltrain's passengers; rather, the Boards will provide direction for staff concerning Board priorities, including easing riders' use of public transit.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your report; I trust you will find our comments helpful.

Sincerely,



Jim Hartnett
Executive Director, Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board.

cc: Board of Directors
via email to: grandjury@sanmateocourt.org



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CHARLES STONE

JIM HARTNETT
GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

October 9, 2019

Honorable Donald J. Ayooob
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Ayooob:

This letter will serve as the San Mateo County Transit District's (District) formal response to the report from the 2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury with regard to SamTrans services, specifically regarding bus-rail connections. The District's Board of Directors reviewed and approved this response on October 2, 2019. The response covers the Grand Jury report's nine findings (numbered F1-F9) and three recommendations (R1-R2 and R4).

As the report notes, better coordination of "Caltrain Connection" bus schedules with Caltrain during commute hours could make using SamTrans fixed route bus service a more appealing first and last mile solution. This could increase SamTrans ridership and decrease car traffic. The Grand Jury recommended that SamTrans investigate whether better coordination is operationally feasible to coordinate and desirable for riders.

FINDINGS

The District generally agrees with findings F1 through F6, F8 and F9 except to the extent that the District cannot speak to the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's ("JPB," the owner and operator of Caltrain) activities addressed in F5 and F6. Relative to findings F3, F4, and F5, and as addressed further below, the District is currently conducting a comprehensive operations analysis (COA) to evaluate current SamTrans services and make recommendations for the development and implementation of a revised service plan that better meets San Mateo County's transportation and mobility needs. The evaluation of opportunities to improve first and last mile connections to Caltrain stations is a key part of this effort. Finally, relative to F7, the District has long focused on sustainability, livable communities and increasing transit ridership instead of the use of single-occupancy vehicles, all of which address traffic congestion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The District values the Grand Jury's recommendations. Improving intermodal connectivity has potential to reduce traffic congestion in station areas. As the three recommendations (R1, R2, and

Jim Hartnett
September 10, 2019
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R4) are closely related, the following response covers all three.

Coordination of bus and train schedules during commute hours was identified in the report as suboptimal. The District agrees that improved connectivity would benefit riders.

The District's COA, known as "Reimagine SamTrans," will be informed by extensive outreach throughout the county to communities, businesses, residents, and riders. Initial findings are expected by the Summer of 2021 with final recommendations and service changes adopted by the District Board of Directors by 2022.

The planned service evaluations and resulting changes of the COA will address recommendations R1, R2, and R4. Unfortunately the timing of this effort will not align with the Grand Jury's recommended June 2020 targets due to the nature and magnitude of the work required for a COA.

Though the District does not anticipate a joint meeting with the District and JPB Boards of Directors as part of the COA (as proposed in R4), there will be extensive staff interaction as part of the service evaluation and planning.

In the meantime, changes to SamTrans service will be made as a part of the Runbook process. Under this process, changes occur three times per year. As those changes are made, the District will evaluate opportunities to improve bus-rail connections, with consideration of the impacts that changes have on the ability of riders to access other locations in the service area, and with the understanding that route improvements must remain operationally sustainable.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your report. We trust that you will find our comments helpful.

Sincerely,



Jim Hartnett
GM/CEO, San Mateo County Transit District

cc: Board of Directors
via email to: grandjury@sammateocourt.org