

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A comprehensive community outreach plan was implemented to provide the public with numerous opportunities to learn of the proposed service changes and respond with input. Public comments and suggestions helped to shape the recommendations presented in the Annual Transit Service Plan.

Schedule and Process

VTA staff held eight public meetings in late January in areas that would be most impacted by the proposed service plan. (See Table 2-1) The meetings and proposed service changes were marketed in the following manner:

- Advertised in community newspapers throughout Santa Clara County prior to meetings.
- Media releases sent to newspapers, broadcast media, multilingual media and daily publications.
- Information and proposals were posted on VTA.org with opportunities to comment by e-mail.
- Meeting announcements were provided to city websites and access cable channel outlets.
- Fliers were mailed to cities in Santa Clara County, Eco Pass employers, community organizations including those on the Title VI list and other stakeholders.
- Proposals were e-mailed to several mailing lists including Eco Pass participants.
- Interior car cards were displayed on all bus and light rail vehicles.
- Information published in December rider newsletter, Take One, giving passengers a “heads up” and directing them to look for more details in a “Special Take One.”
- “Special Take One” distributed on all VTA vehicles in the first and second week of January with information on service change proposals and meeting schedule.
- Meeting announcement fliers included in mailing to monthly pass holders and Eco Pass participants/employers.
- Information made available at the Downtown Customer Service Center and River Oaks.
- All customer service representatives were briefed.

Table 2-1: Public Meeting Schedule

Date	Location	Time	Main Routes of Interest
January 21	East San Jose	2:00 pm	31, 45
January 26	Palo Alto	4:00 pm	88, 89
January 27	Campbell	2:00 pm	37, 48, 49, 63
January 27	Fremont	7:00 pm	180, 181
January 28	Downtown San Jose	3:00 pm & 7:00 pm	11, 63, 64, 66, 68, 180, 181
January 29	Morgan Hill	4:00 pm	15, 68
January 29	Gilroy	7:00 pm	14, 17, 15, 68

Community Feedback

The outreach process resulted in hundreds of comments from community members at the public meetings. 103 persons attended these eight public sessions. Additionally almost 70 comments were received by VTA's Customer Service department. Summary reports of each public meeting were produced by VTA staff. Comments received through the Customer Service department via e-mail, letter or telephone call are individually documented. Both these extensive sources of comment information are available on CD.

VTA staff evaluated the public input to determine how to address them in the final plan. Many comments were regarding specific trips times and schedules on certain lines. These types of comments were received regarding almost all VTA routes. As much as possible, proposals were reevaluated and revised to reflect this input.

Overall there seems to be a good public understanding of VTA's approach to re-allocate services from under performing routes to other routes and markets that demand improved transit service. Extensive use of ridership data collected by our automatic passenger counters provided the quantitative justification for many of the service change proposals. This ridership data provided powerful rationalizations for the proposals and seemed to be understood by the public attending the meetings. While some people were not happy that service was being reduced on their particular route, there was a general understanding of our need to reduce service on certain lines when it wasn't being used.

A few major themes did arise from the public outreach and comment process. Certain service change proposals elicited the most comments and public concern. A summary of these comments and VTA's proposal or revision to the proposal is presented as follows. These comments are further addressed in the Recommendations chapter.

Line 26 (Eastridge Transit Center - Sunnyvale/Lockheed Martin): Many current passengers requested more frequent service on Line 26, particularly on the section of route connecting El Camino to the Moffett Park area. Commentators were mainly high tech and other employees traveling to Moffett Park. VTA's original proposal does include adding more trips into peak period service.

Community Bus Line 45 (Alum Rock Transit Center – Penitencia Creek Transit Center): Passengers are displeased with the proposed reduction in weekday and Saturday service from buses running every 30 minutes to every 60 minutes due to low ridership. A Community Based Transportation Plan for East San Jose is being completed by VTA that identifies an action plan and potential funding sources to address transportation needs in this area. This plan could be the catalyst to attract Lifeline grant funding through MTC to provide additional public transit service in this area, particularly east of White Road.

Lines 61 and 62 (Good Samaritan Hospital to Sierra & Piedmont): Only schedule and trip revisions were originally proposed by VTA for these routes. However San Jose Council member Chu and the Berryessa Union School District requested that we review how these two lines are routed in Berryessa to better serve students at Piedmont Middle School. Currently Line 62 operates on Sierra Road east of Capitol Avenue while Line 61 uses Berryessa. Essentially the routing of these two line was be swapped so Line 62 would use Berryessa and Line 61 would use Sierra. This would eliminate the need for some students traveling to Piedmont Middle School to have to transfer at Capitol Avenue.

Community Bus Line 88 (Palo Alto Veteran's Hospital to California Avenue Caltrain): Line 88 has historically exhibited low ridership. Saturday service has not been provided on this line since January 2008 when it was discontinued due to low ridership (1-2 passengers per trip). In July 2008, based on VTA planning study with the City of Palo Alto and Stanford, Line 88 service was improved to operate every 30 minutes from every 60 minutes in the peak hours. Service to Gunn High School, the major generator on the route was also improved and has done well. However the other Line 88 trips continue to perform poorly, carrying an average of 4 passengers per trip and do not justify continuing the 30 minute peak frequencies, so we are proposing that service return to operating every 60 minutes on weekdays. Veterans from the Palo Alto VA Hospital and the Western Blind Rehabilitation Center located there attended one of our public meetings to request that the service not be reduced and Saturday service be restored. However given the low ridership here we cannot justify any higher levels of service. A letter from Congress member Eshoo was received supporting the veterans and the reduction in Line 88 service.

Express 180 & Express 181 (Fremont BART to San Jose Diridon Station): Proposed service changes on the rerouting of these two lines garnered the most public commentary. Initially staff proposed to reroute both lines to use I-880, instead of I-680, to take advantage of the recently opened HOV lane and completion of the Mission Boulevard interchange. Many riders objected to changing both lines as it would inconvenience those going to the Great Mall as well as those who were using Park & Ride locations along Mission Boulevard. To accommodate these riders, the proposal has been changed to include a rerouting of only the Express 181 to use I-880. This proposal is pending the availability of a Park and Ride along or near Stevenson. Some persons also commented on discontinuing the operations of Express 180 south of the Great Mall as this would require a transfer to light rail to go downtown or use of the Express 181, which is being proposed to operate all day to downtown San Jose.