

Peninsula Shuttle Study

CALTRAIN

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Agenda

- Shuttle Program Overview
- Study Context
- Key Recommendations
- Next Steps

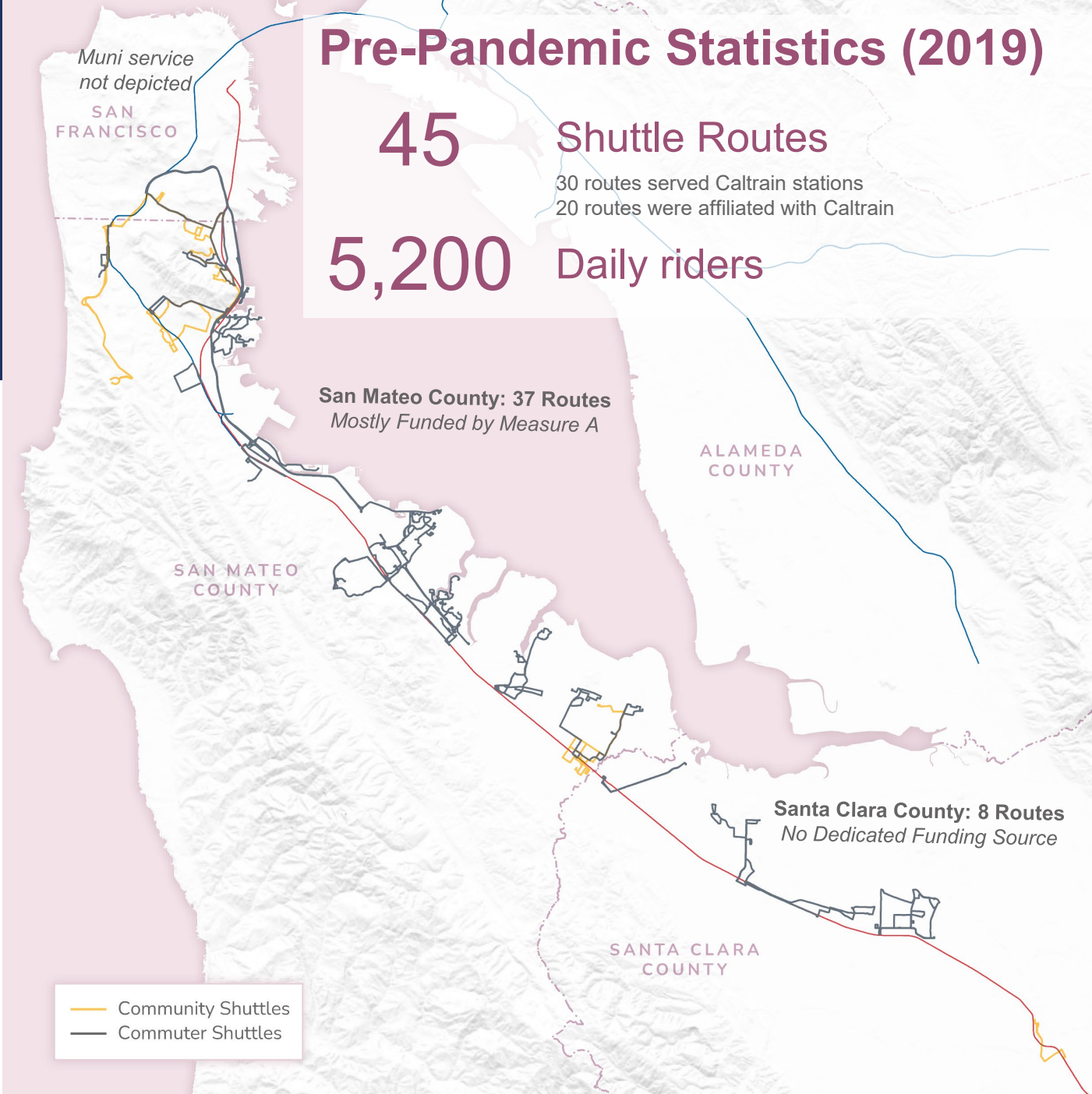


Shuttle Program Overview

The Peninsula Shuttle Program is a **multi-agency public-private partnership** between Caltrain, SamTrans, SMCTA, C/CAG, Commute.org, cities, and the private sector.

The program seeks to increase transit ridership by addressing first/last mile and local mobility needs for commuters and underserved populations.

San Mateo County's Measure A sales tax funds most shuttles within the county. Caltrain previously used its own funds to supplement shuttle funding in Santa Clara County and Muni service in San Francisco.



Recent Shuttle Program Challenges



Inconsistent Performance

Prior to the pandemic, shuttle ridership was decreasing overall even as Caltrain ridership was increasing.

Some routes were doing very well, while others saw a significant drop in ridership.



Shifting Demand

Shuttle ridership remains significantly lower than pre-COVID levels. There remains uncertainty around post-COVID travel behavior and ridership recovery.

At the same time, substantial development activity is expanding the need for shuttle service in some cities.



Difficulty Finding Shuttles

Lack of shuttle information and infrastructure creates barriers to ridership growth.

Shuttles are not included in most SamTrans materials and many cannot be found in trip planners like Google Maps.

Not all shuttle stops have signage and sidewalk access.



Organizational Complexity

Many agencies are involved in often overlapping roles.

No single agency has the full breadth of staff resources needed to cover the full range of management responsibilities.

Only San Mateo County provides dedicated funding for shuttles.

Study Context

Caltrain's Role in the Shuttle Program

Caltrain has different roles across 20 of the 45 public shuttle routes, including directly funding or operating shuttles as well as sponsoring grants on behalf of the private sector. Caltrain is also served by 10 Commute.org routes.

The varied roles of Caltrain alongside other agencies contribute to the program's complexity.

About This Study

SamTrans and Caltrain jointly funded this study to improve the effectiveness of the shuttle program and to simplify its management structure.

The study involved close coordination between Caltrain, SamTrans, SMCTA, C/CAG, Commute.org. It also incorporated input from over 50 other agencies and private sector entities as well as approximately 900 shuttle rider surveys.

Caltrain's Adopted FY22 Budget

In adopting the FY22 budget, the Caltrain board provided direction to discontinue the use of discretionary funds toward shuttles and standardize Caltrain's roles across its service area.

As a result, the following changes occurred:

1. Santa Clara County: Caltrain no longer funds or operates shuttles
2. San Francisco County: Caltrain no longer funds Muni service
3. San Mateo County: Caltrain is fulfilling its remaining multi-year grant commitment to shuttles and is reassessing its roles in coordination with agency partners

This study continues the transition of Caltrain's roles in the shuttle program, with an emphasis on changes in San Mateo County.

Agency Roles in the Shuttle Program



Grant Funder

Develops policies and awards grants for shuttles



Primarily funded by Measure A in San Mateo County. No dedicated funding in Santa Clara County.



Grant Sponsor

Plans service, prepares grant applications, and develops budgets



Includes Commute.org, Caltrain, SamTrans, and cities



Operator

Contracts with vendor and oversees day-to-day shuttle operations



Primarily Commute.org, Caltrain, and SamTrans, with some operated by cities and private sector



Funding Partner

Contributes matching funds



Includes the public and private sector

Caltrain's Role in San Mateo County

Caltrain is involved in 12 of the 22 routes in San Mateo County serving Caltrain stations



Grant Funder

22 shuttles serving Caltrain stations receive grant funding from SMCTA and C/CAG



Grant Sponsor

Caltrain sponsors grants for 8 shuttles in the SMCTA-C/CAG program.

Most shuttle grants are sponsored by Commute.org and cities.



Operator

Caltrain contracts operations for 10 shuttles.

Most shuttles are operated by Commute.org and the private sector.



Funding Partner

Caltrain contributes matching funds for 2 shuttles.

Matching funds are mostly provided by the private sector and cities.

Caltrain's Role in Santa Clara County

Caltrain was previously involved in 8 routes in Santa Clara County serving Caltrain stations pre-COVID-19



Grant Funder

There is no dedicated shuttle funding source in Santa Clara County. Previously, the Air District awarded some funds to 6 shuttles.



Grant Sponsor

Caltrain sponsored grants for 6 shuttles in the Air District program.

2 shuttles were funded directly via Caltrain and did not receive any grant funds.



Operator

Caltrain contracted operations for 5 shuttles.

The remaining shuttles were operated by the private sector.



Funding Partner

Caltrain contributed funding toward 7 shuttles.

The private sector and cities contributed matching funds to 6 shuttles.

VTA coordinated with Caltrain but had no direct role in funding or operating shuttles

Recent Changes in Santa Clara County

Caltrain ceased involvement in Santa Clara County shuttles in the FY22 budget due to loss of grant and matching funds coupled with declining ridership and rising costs.

- Four shuttles lost matching funds from the private sector and cities
- Six shuttles also lost grant funding due to changes to the Air District program
- MVgo and Stanford Marguerite shuttles continue to operate independently without Caltrain's involvement

Caltrain and VTA may reassess first/last mile connections in Santa Clara County as needs continue to evolve. Funding for shuttles in Santa Clara County remains challenging without a dedicated funding source.

Caltrain's Role in San Francisco & Recent Changes

Pre-Pandemic Role in Muni Service

- Caltrain contributed supplemental funding toward three Muni bus routes
- These routes provided shuttle-like service during peak periods connecting 4th & King Station with the Financial District and Mid-Market areas

Recent Changes

- Muni suspended these routes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has no timetable for their return
- Caltrain discontinued discretionary funding contributions in its FY22 budget



Overview of Study Recommendations

San Mateo County Changes



**Simplify Core
Management Roles**



**Refresh Shuttle
Evaluation Process**



**Standardize Data
Management**



**Enhance Rider
Communication**

Today's Focus

Standardizing Caltrain's roles across its service area and transitioning its responsibilities in San Mateo County

Simplify Core Management Roles

Transitioning Caltrain's Roles in San Mateo County



Grant Funder

No major changes.

BAAQMD grants no longer pursued after changes to the program.



Grant Sponsors

Commute.org and cities would sponsor all grants and manage services.

Caltrain and SamTrans would no longer sponsor grants.

Commute.org **Cities**



Operators

Shuttle operations would be consolidated under SamTrans.

Caltrain and Commute.org would no longer administer their own operations contracts.



Cities & Private Sector



Funding Partners

Cities and the private sector would be responsible for matching funds

Caltrain and SamTrans would no longer contribute matching funds toward shuttles (except shuttles related to Caltrain operations).

Cities & Private Sector

What it Means for Caltrain

Caltrain would complete its transition into a more consistent role in shuttles across its service area, focusing on the following topics:

- Coordinating service changes and transfers with shuttle operators
- Managing shuttle access and circulation at stations

Caltrain would no longer be involved in the following shuttle roles in San Mateo County:

1. Operations: Caltrain would no longer operate shuttles. Shuttle operations would be transitioned to SamTrans.
2. Grants: Caltrain would no longer sponsor shuttle grant applications on behalf of cities and the private sector. Shuttle grants would be transitioned to Commute.org and cities.
3. Funding: Caltrain would no longer fund shuttles unless they're directly related to service needs (such as the Broadway Station Shuttle or temporary shuttles during construction).

Benefits of Changes to Management Roles

- ✓ **Renews Focus on Ridership & Partnerships**
Emphasizes growing ridership and building private sector & community partnerships
- ✓ **Simplifies Shuttle Operations**
Consolidates operations of most shuttles under a single vendor contract
- ✓ **Streamlines Funding and Administration**
Reduces administrative complexity for all agencies involved in the shuttle program

Other Study Recommendations

Other study recommendations benefit Caltrain riders using shuttles in San Mateo County:



Refresh Shuttle Evaluation Process (SMCTA-C/CAG Shuttle Call for Projects)

- Implement more data-driven evaluation
- Prioritize ridership and equity
- Expand shuttle access & public benefits
- Enhance coordination with SamTrans and Caltrain



Enhance Rider Communication & Standardize Data Management

- Incorporate shuttle information onto third-party trip planning and real-time tracking apps
- Add all routes affiliated with shuttle program onto the SamTrans system map and website
- Publish ridership and survey for use by cities and private sector

Next Steps

- Receive comments from Caltrain, SamTrans, SMCTA, and Commute.org boards
- Caltrain continues collaboration with agency partners and periodically reassesses its role in first/last mile services

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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