Summer 2017

THINK ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION
Using alternative transportation to get to, from, and around the City of Good Living has many benefits for both you and the San Carlos community!
Stop worrying about parking, eliminate the hassle of traffic congestion, lower your carbon footprint, and improve your health and mood by choosing to leave your car at home.

INFO
Find helpful resources at www.cityofsancarlos.org/alternative transportation

Traffic congestion in the Bay Area and here in San Carlos is a challenge well known to everyone who has ever been late for work or an important appointment because of unexpected delays on their usual route. Even the most carefully planned trips can have surprise traffic jams causing excessive delays.

While there is no single solution to reducing traffic congestion, this newsletter spotlights some of the ways that the City of San Carlos is working to improve transportation in town. This issue provides an update on some of the major developments and happenings related to transit in the City of Good Living. We look ahead to the future electrification of Caltrain and the addition of high-speed rail service in San Carlos and review some of the alternative transportation options already available, such as SamTrans Route 61 and the San Carlos Commuter Shuttle.

The challenges posed by traffic congestion cannot be solved by a single entity or with a single solution; instead, these challenges must be addressed communally, and through a variety of approaches. For the San Carlos community, this means taking advantage of a number of resources available to residents that make alternative transportation easy, convenient and accessible.

Jay Walter
City of San Carlos Public Works Director
SAMTRANS BUS SERVICE

In December 2014, SamTrans approved its five-year Strategic Plan, a blueprint that will guide policy decisions until 2019. The plan focuses on five main goals:

- Increasing bus ridership by 15 percent
- Growing passenger fare revenue by 20 percent
- Reducing annual debt service by $1.5 million
- Improving organizational performance
- Managing workforce change

SamTrans has already successfully pursued several of these goals. Due in large part to the changes implemented as a result of the SamTrans Service Plan—the most extensive reworking of bus operations along the Peninsula in a generation—bus ridership is stabilizing, reversing years of stagnant growth. The bus agency also approved changes to its fare policy, aimed at restoring the agency’s fiscal health and achieving the goal of 20 percent fare revenue growth.

The SamTrans Board is fully committed to making transit a viable option for San Carlos and other communities along the Peninsula. The Board is hopeful that San Carlos residents will also make a commitment to taking an alternative form of transportation at least one day per week to help make a difference in reducing traffic congestion.

SAMTRANS CURRENTLY SERVES SAN CARLOS WITH THREE ROUTES:

- Route 61 starts at the San Carlos Caltrain station and travels through the City up to Crestview Drive and back down to Carlmont High School.
- Route 295 starts at the San Carlos Caltrain station and travels north along San Carlos Avenue into Belmont.
- ECR operates as an express bus service north and south along El Camino Real.

SamTrans also operates a Paratransit service called Redi-Wheels, which is for persons with disabilities who cannot independently use regular SamTrans bus service on the bayside of the county.

You can find more information about all of these SamTrans services in San Carlos by visiting www.samtrans.com.

SAN CARLOS “GRASS ROOTS” SUCCESS STORY-ROUTE 61

Started in August 2016, Route 61 was designed with a special emphasis on serving students from Tierra Linda Middle School and Carlmont High School. This two-year pilot program is funded through the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and the future of the route is entirely dependent on student ridership.

Like all SamTrans routes, Route 61 has service to other locations within the community, including the Downtown, the Youth Center and the Caltrain station. The new route came about after a group of San Carlos parents concerned about traffic congestion in the vicinity of the two schools worked with SamTrans to develop a new route.
Caltrain Electrification

Over the last decade, Caltrain has experienced a substantial increase in ridership and anticipates further demand as the Bay Area’s population grows. The Caltrain Modernization Program, scheduled to be implemented by early 2021, will electrify and upgrade the operating efficiency, capacity, safety and reliability of Caltrain’s commuter rail service. A key component of the Caltrain Modernization Program is the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP), which consists of converting Caltrain from diesel to electric trains for services between San Francisco and San Jose.

PROJECT BENEFITS

Electrification will make it possible to increase service while offering several advantages over existing diesel power, including:

- **Improved train performance, increased ridership capacity and increased service:** Electrified trains can accelerate and decelerate more quickly than diesel powered trains, allowing Caltrain to run more efficiently. In addition, because of their performance advantages, electrified trains will enable more frequent and faster train service to more riders.

- **Increased revenue and reduced fuel cost:** An electrified Caltrain will increase ridership and fare revenue received by the City, while decreasing fuel costs.

- **Reduced engine noise:** Electrified train engines are measurably quieter than diesel engines, which will reduce noise pollution as they pass through San Carlos.

- **Improved regional air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions:** Electrified trains will produce substantially less air pollution compared with diesel trains, even when the indirect emissions from electrical power generation are included. Increased ridership will also reduce automobile use, resulting in additional air quality benefits in San Carlos.

Caltrain has been considering electrification of its tracks and trains for decades. When electrification is fully implemented, San Carlos residents will experience more frequent train service at the San Carlos Station and better on time performance. Plus, with all new equipment, trains will be more spacious and comfortable than the current fleet.
California High Speed Rail

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is responsible for planning, designing, building and operating the first high-speed rail system in the nation. The new rail system will connect the mega-regions of the state, and is anticipated to contribute to economic development, job growth, and a cleaner environment state-wide.

The San Francisco to San Jose Project Section, of which San Carlos is a part, is included in the first phase of the statewide system. This section of the project is unique because rail service along the San Francisco to San Jose corridor will be a blended service—with Caltrain and high-speed rail trains sharing the same tracks.

The project is currently in the Design & Technical Analysis Phase, which is expected to last through the rest of 2017. The next phase will include releasing the Draft Environmental Impact Report for public review and comment, and also selecting how to design and align any new track being built.

The High Speed Rail Authority is studying different alignment alternatives throughout the corridor as part of the environmental review process. In San Carlos, there are currently two options under consideration: No Additional Passing Tracks (Alternative A, shown on map) and Additional Passing Tracks (Alternative B, shown on map). Alternative A avoids construction, disruption, buying land, and the aesthetic impacts posed by the expanded construction footprint of new passing tracks. Alternative B would be six miles long, extending from south of 9th Avenue in San Mateo to north of Whipple Avenue in Redwood City.

High Speed Rail Authority staff made a presentation to the San Carlos City Council on June 26, 2017. Information from the presentation can be found on the meeting agenda at www.cityofsancarlos.org/agenda2551.

INFO

Learn more about California’s High Speed Rail by visiting www.hsr.ca.gov

MILESTONES

- Env. Clearance (Jan)
- LNTP Award (Sept)
- First Train Set Delivered
- Rollout First Passenger Service with Electric Trains
- Electrification Infrastructure Construction
- Final System Testing

- Project contracts extended through June 30, 2017
- NTP (June) Contingent on federal funding
Possible Impact to the San Carlos Caltrain Station

Alternative B may impact the historic San Carlos Depot. The Environmental Impact Report will explore the possibility of constructing a bridge structure for the passing tracks approximately 73 feet tall (about 50 feet above the top of the Depot) to completely avoid this historic structure.

If the new bridge structure were built 50 feet above the top of the depot:
- It would allow for a 10-foot clearance above the highest point of the Depot
- The bridge structure would be four tracks in width
- It would require modifications to the existing San Carlos Caltrain Station, as the train platforms would be located on the new structure

If the new bridge structure is not built 50 feet above the depot, the State Historic Preservation Office would need to be consulted and any decision on how to address the effects on the station (including moving the station) would be made in collaboration with local stakeholders.

Construction Update

2016 BUSINESS PLAN: KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line
- Operational by 2025
- San Jose-North of Bakersfield
- $20.7 Billion – Fully Fundable

Extension to San Francisco, Merced & Bakersfield
- Operational by 2025
- Additional $2.9 Billion

Phase 1 (San Francisco-LA/Anaheim)
- Operational by 2029
City Council Vision Statement
San Carlos will continue to move with confidence into the future to become a desirable, vibrant family and business friendly community, admired as a great place to live, learn, work and play.

THIS ISSUE’S FOCUS:
ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT OPTIONS IN SAN CARLOS

FREE SAN CARLOS COMMUTER SHUTTLE

The San Carlos Commuter Shuttle started service in September 2016. The shuttle runs to/from the Caltrain station to various stops on the east side to serve businesses there during the morning and afternoon commute hours. This shuttle offers commuters an easy option to commute by train and closes the last mile gap between work and the Caltrain station.

This shuttle is generously funded by a two-year grant through the San Mateo County Transportation Authority Measure A Local Shuttle Program and partnerships between the City of San Carlos, Commute.org, Nugen, Natera, Novartis and the Sutter Health Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Ridership numbers are critical to be competitive for future grant funding and to keep this shuttle operating. While the shuttle experienced a surge of riders in its first six months of service, there has been a decline in ridership in the last three months. The City and business partners want to spread the word about this great, free service that connects commuters from the Caltrain station to businesses in north east San Carlos.

To find out more information on the shuttle or to view the shuttle schedule, visit http://www.commute.org/shuttles/routes-and-schedules/290-san-carlos-commuter