

**SAMTRANS**  
**CORRESPONDENCE**  
**as of 11-3-2021**



**PTSA**<sup>®</sup>  
*everychild.onevoice.*<sup>®</sup>

November 2, 2021

Dear SamTrans Board,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Sequoia High School Parent Teacher Association (PTSA). The mission of the PTSA is to advocate for our Parents, Students, and Staff and this includes the health and safety of students. Sequoia High School has over 2,000 students who attend daily. As with most schools, traffic congestion (whether that be bike, car, pedestrian, wheels, etc.) is heavy around the school for most of the day with classes, sports activities, and clubs. Last month, one of our students was hit by a car in a crosswalk on Brewster at Elwood. Thankfully his injuries were not life threatening, and it was an unfortunate reminder not all of the routes to school are safe.

We have heard from the community, parents and students that bus lines they used to use have been eliminated, or rerouted. Historically there were a few bus routes that served James Ave at the south end of our campus, including Routes 274 and 295. However, Route 274 is proposed for elimination and Route 295 has undergone various changes over the last decade, specifically not aligning with Sequoia's starting bell schedule, eliminating the route as an option for many of our students. We are asking you to consider the Reimagine proposal for Route 295 that will extend the route south to Jefferson Ave via Alameda, which not only adds several minutes to the journey as well as potential traffic backups, but more importantly is our concern for students crossing dangerous main roads crowded with distracted drivers like the one who hit one of our students last month.

In discussing with Redwood City Safe Routes to School, we are asking you to reconsider restoring Route 295 as it was designed pre-2014 and having buses arrive regularly to serve the dozens of schools in San Mateo County that align on this route. The route previously used Hopkins, Hudson and James, which made it much safer for bus riders to cross less impacted streets and bypass traffic on Alameda, Jefferson and El Camino. We are also mindful of the dangers associated with crossing El Camino as there have been two pedestrian deaths at the James intersection in the past few years. This single route could provide another option for so many students to get to school safely, and it also could serve several other schools located adjacent to our campus which bring in traffic and related dangers during the critical drop off and release times.

We believe SamTrans is an important option for students to get to and from school, work and other activities and we are committed to helping families identify safe transportation options. With the current Reimagine process underway, we hope you will consider our feedback in your final plan. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Eller Ha  
Sequoia High School PTSA President  
on behalf of the Sequoia High School PTSA Board and Executive Board  
sequoiapta@gmail.com

**From:** [reimagine@samtrans.com](mailto:reimagine@samtrans.com)  
**To:** [egarcia@rcsdk8.net](mailto:egarcia@rcsdk8.net); [jbaker@rcsdk8.net](mailto:jbaker@rcsdk8.net)  
**Cc:** [amacavoy@rcsdk8.net](mailto:amacavoy@rcsdk8.net); [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](mailto:Board (@samtrans.com)); [mdiaz@redwoodcity.org](mailto:mdiaz@redwoodcity.org); [MCallagy@smcgov.org](mailto:MCallagy@smcgov.org); [dwilliams@seq.org](mailto:dwilliams@seq.org); [nmagee@smcoe.org](mailto:nmagee@smcoe.org); [ravendano@redwoodcity.org](mailto:ravendano@redwoodcity.org)  
**Subject:** Reimagine SamTrans and Route 295  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 3, 2021 11:28:21 AM  
**Attachments:** [Superintendent Baker- Reimagine Response.pdf](#)

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November 3, 2021

John R. Baker, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Redwood City School District

Dear Superintendent Baker:

Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding our *Reimagine SamTrans* project. We appreciate your thoughtful feedback and suggestions related to Route 295 and its service to students in the Redwood City School District. Attached, please find a response from the *Reimagine SamTrans* Project Team. Please do not to hesitate to contact us if you have any additional questions or feedback. Thank you.

Best,  
The *Reimagine SamTrans* Project Team



November 3, 2021

John R. Baker, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Redwood City School District  
750 Bradford Street  
Redwood City, CA

Dear Superintendent Baker:

Thank you for taking the time to contact us regarding our *Reimagine SamTrans* project. We appreciate your thoughtful feedback and suggestions related to Route 295 and its service to students in the Redwood City School District.

School-related service is an important element of the SamTrans bus system and we remain committed to making transit more available for youth who depend on our services on a daily basis. As part of the *Reimagine SamTrans* project, recommended changes to school related service focus on changes that improve the efficiency of the route network while also providing service for youth and parents who depend on public transit to get to and from school.

Though reinstating the full 295 route (as it existed prior to 2014) is not included in the recommended network, we believe the recommendations we are putting forward create the right service for Redwood City students and the bus network as a whole.

While we are not recommending changes to any school focused routes in Redwood City, you can see the full recommendations for all Redwood City [here](#). Please note, that if a route is not listed then it is **not** recommended for a change. You can see information on all SamTrans service [here](#). If you are interested in all the school service changes we are recommending, those are listed [here](#).

We constantly evaluate our school service and will keep this concept in mind as we move forward. In addition, we encourage you to continue to work with our partners at Safe Routes to School to help your families navigate different transit options for their children.

Thank you again for your thoughtful feedback.

Sincerely,  
The *Reimagine SamTrans* Project Team

Cc: San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors

Melissa Stevenson Díaz, Redwood City City Manager  
Mike Callagy, San Mateo County County Manager  
Dr. Darnise Williams, SUHSD Superintendent  
Nancy Magee, Superintendent of County Schools  
Rafael Avendano, Redwood City Together



October 19, 2021

SamTrans Board of Directors  
1250 San Carlos Ave  
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

SamTrans Board of Directors:

On behalf of the staff of Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), I am pleased to offer our enthusiastic support for the Reimagine SamTrans new bus network. As your public transit partner to the south and member of the project's Technical Advisory Group, we are confident that the new bus network will achieve the project's goals of improving the rider experience, growing ridership, and becoming a more effective mobility provider.

VTA implemented our own network redesign project in late 2019, following a community-led network design process similar to Reimagine SamTrans. Like the new bus network before you, our new network increased our service investments in transit-supportive areas to create a network of fast, frequent, and reliable service. Although the service reinvestment decisions were not easy, our new network was an immediate success and turned a four-year trend of declining ridership into impressive ridership growth in the first few months. We see all the hallmarks of our successful approach in the Reimagine SamTrans customer-focused decision-making process and we have no doubt that the new network will be a success.

Bus network redesign projects are never easy, as they necessarily involve reallocating service from one place to another with difficult tradeoff decisions at each step along the way. The Reimagine SamTrans team used an impressive process of objective analysis and community discussion on tradeoff questions to produce a thoughtful and visionary new bus network grounded in the community's values. As we transition out of the pandemic's impact on travel behaviors, public transit operators will need to innovate and win the support of every rider, and your new bus network is primed to do just that. We are excited to see SamTrans riders benefit from the improved bus network, and we look forward to a continued partnership in service.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Deborah Dagang'.

Deborah Dagang  
Chief Planning & Programming Officer

**From:** [Shweta Bhatnagar](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Tolleson, Millie](#); [Wegener, Christy](#)  
**Subject:** Stanford Comment Ltr on Reimagine SamTrans  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 3, 2021 11:42:34 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Stanford - ReImagine SamTrans Final Comments.pdf](#)

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**ATTENTION:** This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Hello SamTrans Board of Directors,

Attached please find a letter from Stanford University and Stanford Health Care in regards to the Reimagine SamTrans effort. We support the changes proposed by SamTrans staff and were happy to have the opportunity to provide input during this process. Thank you for taking on this enormous effort on behalf of the residents of both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

With regards,  
Shweta

**Shweta Bhatnagar**

Senior Director, Government Affairs  
Office of Government Affairs  
Stanford University  
650-723-4708 | [shwetab@stanford.edu](mailto:shwetab@stanford.edu)



**Stanford University**



November 3, 2021

Charles Stone, Chair  
San Mateo County Transit District  
1250 San Carlos Ave.  
San Carlos, CA 94070

To Board Chair Stone,

**RE: REIMAGINE SAMTRANS**

On behalf of Stanford University and Stanford Health Care, we would like to thank SamTrans for embarking on this Reimagine SamTrans effort and identifying ways to improve SamTrans service throughout the region. Stanford's transportation teams have been following the Reimagine process since 2019 and hoping for service changes that could increase ridership and provide more commute options for our commuters. Many of our commuters who live in San Mateo County drive to work rather than take public transit. However, we believe our commuters could switch and use SamTrans more often if more frequent, convenient and reliable bus service is available.

To that end, we support SamTrans' proposal for the following:

**Streamlining and Consolidating Routes 280/281 and Extending to Stanford University**

Stanford University's annual commute survey has identified a sizable population of university and hospital employees who live in East Palo Alto and commute to Stanford for work. Approximately 25 percent of these employees, many of whom are hospital and essential workers, live in places served by Route 280 and Route 281 which currently only goes to the Stanford Shopping Center and falls short of providing direct access to the hospitals and main Stanford campus. We believe the new consolidated Route 281 will see more ridership now that service will be extend beyond the Shopping Center, to the hospitals, and then to Stanford's Oval on the main campus. We strongly support this proposed change in service.

**Increasing the Frequency of Route ECR**

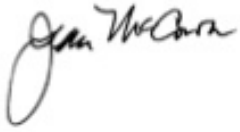
Having more frequent service for Route ECR will give our commuters more options to get to our Stanford Redwood City, Stanford Hospitals, and main campus in a time efficient manner. We also support an increase in weekend service as proposed.

**Enhancing Service Near Stanford Redwood City Campus**

The Reimagine effort will provide increased service and frequency for several routes that operate in Redwood City. We support the implementation of the new Route 276 as it will travel from the Redwood City Caltrain Station to public transit dependent communities near our Stanford Redwood City campus. This is an important service for the community and provides a much-needed option for those who need to access our facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Reimagine SamTrans effort. SamTrans is a vital resource to the region, and we want to ensure it continues to thrive. We are happy to continue to work with your staff as you move towards developing new service plans. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean McCown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jean" being more prominent than the last name "McCown".

Jean McCown  
Associate Vice President, Office of Government Affairs  
Stanford University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason J. Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" and the last name "Hill" being clearly legible.

Jason Hill  
Associate Vice President, Office of Government Affairs  
Stanford Health Care

cc: Millie Tolleson, Principal Planner, SamTrans  
Christy Wegener, Director of Planning, SamTrans

**From:** [Sonia Elkes](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil@cityofsancarlos.org](#); [Steven Machida](#); [Grace Le](#); [iyakubovich@scsdk8.org](#); [Al Savay](#); [Sandra Nierenberg](#); [jfrentress@scsdk8.org](#); [mshelton@scsdk8.org](#); [tfox@scsdk8.org](#); [tdomer@scsdk8.org](#); [kugrin@scsdk8.org](#); [BAbdelrahman@scsdk8.org](#); [vgamez@scsdk8.org](#); [CGulati@scsdk8.org](#); [JPellegrine@scsdk8.org](#)  
**Subject:** The imperative of SamTrans investing in students riding public buses  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 3, 2021 12:00:32 AM

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You don't often get email from [soniaelkes@gmail.com](mailto:soniaelkes@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

**ATTENTION:** This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear SamTrans Board,

In advance of the Nov 3 board meeting I want to reiterate my support for public transit. I think it's one of the most crucial elements for a sustainable, efficient, socially-connected society, and I am a dedicated fan.

Right now SamTrans has to make hard decisions about how to distribute services with limited resources and driver shortages, and I respect the difficulty of this and don't envy the position.

**But**, I also want to make crystal-clear that *in addition to* improving efficiency and serving underprivileged areas, SamTrans has a moral and economic imperative *to invest in drawing new riders*.

Nearly empty buses, that I see repeatedly as I commute by bike, are a blight for lots of reasons, but the worst part to me is that they demoralize the heroes who drive them. I'm not a bus driver, so I can't know exactly how the drivers feel, but I've cooked enough meals for a family of picky eaters to know that pouring energy into providing an important service that isn't valued, or worse, that the people who should be most appreciative turn their noses up at, is demoralizing at best and a serious health hazard at worst. It's cognitive dissonance of the most pernicious kind to be *stuck in the same traffic that refuses to ride your bus when they're going the same way as you anyway*.

And this is why I can't underscore strongly enough the *opportunity that embracing our youth as public bus riders represents*, toward meeting **the goal of ushering in a new generation of public bus-confident riders**.

Youth have always been trendsetters in our society. And a generation of youth who *can confidently take a public bus to school, and also use that same bus to go other places they want to go*, are future **adults who aren't afraid of public transit**, a *particularly valuable* kind of community member.

To my mind a public bus on a school route is more valuable to a community than a dedicated school bus is, because taking a public bus teaches more independence and responsibility, and represents a particularly special kind of freedom, a sustainable and socially-responsible kind.

In the San Carlos/Belmont/RWC community it is the OLD Route 295, the one from *before* 2014 that connected *dozens of schools*, that is the route that represents one of the best hopes we have for transforming the image of public bus ridership in our relatively public-transit-phobic community, through promoting youth ridership.

This is the feedback from the group of folks who worked long and hard to get SamTrans buses able to serve San Carlos/Belmont/Redwood City school students via the routes 61 and 95, and they are

working just as hard to find a way to return the currently UNDER-utilized, inefficient and too infrequent 295 into a well-utilized, popular route for students—because our young people are our future transit-confident adults:

→ **Here's a summary of concerns on the present proposal**

The proposed changes to the #295 Route won't make it useful enough for students traveling to/from Sequoia and Carlmont High Schools and to the Youth Center from Tierra

Linda/Mariposa/Charter Learning Center campus.

○

**Frequency needs to be every 20-30 min during peak hours, 6-9am and 3-6pm, not hourly as is being proposed.** Hourly service is insufficient--it won't meet the needs of multiple different school bell schedules. If we don't want to run empty buses (which happens to the current 295 because the timing works for so few students), the frequency needs to make sense for the people who most need them.

○

**It's not realistic to require students to transfer/take multiple buses to get to school.** Planners focused on creating shorter bus routes (to be more on-time) with more transfer opportunities to connect to other routes. However, requiring students to take TWO buses to school isn't realistic--it involves too much risk and uncertainty. **School routes need to get kids from home to final destination in one ride.**

- **Please restore the pre-2014 Route #295 that served DOZENS of schools (including Carlmont and Sequoia High), and with more frequency, at least every 20-30 min during peak school times.**

**Would SamTrans consider a pilot of the old 295 route, at least down to Woodside HS, which has a broader service coverage to avoid transfers, if funding and operational needs**

would allow it? **Given bus driver shortages**, might it be possible to recruit drivers, potentially retirees from within the communities they would drive in, who would be interested in driving *because* it's a local school route, and presumably only during these peak school times? **(I don't even like driving and even I can see the appeal of driving a public bus that is a school route.)** And if there's no funding left in the budget at this time for this kind of a comprehensive student-needs-led pilot, please seriously consider taking ALL of SamTrans current marketing & advertising budget and transferring it into this kind of project. I can think of few better marketing strategies than successfully transforming a generation of Bay Area suburban youth into regular, reliable, responsible public transit takers.

Here's what the [original pre-2014 Route #295](#) looked like, which served dozens of schools:



(The new SamTrans proposed Jefferson/Alameda extension adds unnecessary time and traffic backups. Consider using

Hopkins/Hudson as the old route did.)

Here's some of our publicity:

WHY RIDE A BUS? Create safer streets! Converting more school trips from cars to alternative multi-modal transportation options, including transit, walking, or biking, reduces peak period congestion, improves local air quality, and promotes youth independence. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children nationwide walk or bike to school. Rates of severe childhood obesity are three times higher than they were 30 years ago, putting children at higher risk of premature death and several chronic diseases. Parents driving their children to school accounts for 20-30% of morning rush hour traffic.

**Effective, efficient Public Transit for Students is a Win-Win for Everyone** -- students, parents, community congestion relief, air quality & climate. Bikes and buses go hand-in-hand, especially when it rains. Youth taking public buses to school are tomorrow's confident public transit-taking adults and there is NO hope for climate and congestion relief that doesn't include efficient, effective public transit.

Thanks for all of your time and attention,  
Sincerely,  
Sonia Elkes  
Resident of San Carlos, CA  
Parent of four, ages 5-17  
(415) 806-4632