

Transit Action Plan Sept 2022

Executive summary

The Transit Action Plan provides an overview of recommendations to support transit reliability and access and improve the experience of using transit in Visitacion Valley and Portola (VV/P), as part of the Community Based Transportation Plan (CBTP). The Transit Action Plan focuses on understanding ways to address service needs identified through the community outreach process. Proposed improvements will be consistent with Muni Forward and the Muni Service Equity Strategy.

The **Community Context** section outlines the conditions of current transit service in the area, including the T Third, 8 Bayshore, 9 San Bruno, 29 Sunset, 44 O'Shaughnessy, 54 Felton, and 56 Rutland. The 8 and 9 both have rapid services that have restarted after they were suspended in 2020 due to COVID. The 44 O'Shaughnessy, 90 San Bruno Owl, and 91 3rd Street/19th Ave Owl provide overnight service to the neighborhoods. The community is also served by the Bayshore Caltrain station.

The **Community Input** documents all input collected during the VV/P CBTP process related to improving transit service, changing transit routes, improving bus stops, installing new transit shelters, or creating safe walking routes to bus stops. Input was received through community interviews and two phases of outreach through surveys and written comments. Inputs include 12 community interviews, over 600 surveys, and over 500 public comments during two phases of public outreach, reaching more than 2,000 residents overall. Four Muni stop improvements were proposed in response to community input, included in Phase 2 surveys. All proposed projects received majority community support.

There are a broad range of Muni projects addressing some of the input and priorities shared during public outreach, documented in the **Recently Completed Muni Projects** and **SFMTA Transit Commitments** sections. Some projects have already been completed, such as the Transit Priority Project on the 9 San Bruno; upcoming projects, such as the 29 Sunset Improvement Project or the Central Subway, will also directly address resident input. The **Future Transit Efforts** identifies other projects that currently are either not funded or do not have an established implementation schedule.

There is still a subset of resident needs and challenges that remain unaddressed through existing Muni commitments, documented in the **Areas for Future Work** section. These priorities will be represented in the Policy Recommendations section of the Draft Plan, which will be shared with the public during Phase 3 of public outreach in the winter of 2022/2023. The Policy Recommendations in the Draft Plan should help to guide future work.



Vis Valley Portola COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Community Context

Current Transit Service

The VV/P communities are currently served by 1 Muni light rail line, 8 Muni bus lines, 3 Muni rapid or express bus lines, and 2 Muni OWL overnight bus lines. San Bruno Avenue is the main commercial corridor for the Portola neighborhood and sees high volumes of drivers and pedestrians, as well as the 8 Bayshore, 8AX Bayshore Express, 8BX Bayshore B Express, 9 San Bruno, and 9R San Bruno Rapid Muni lines. At peak periods, buses travel on San Bruno Avenue through Portola and Visitacion Valley every 2 minutes. The Caltrain Bayshore station, providing access to regional transit, is located just south of the CBTP project area. Figure 1 shows the transit network in the VV/P area and table 1 shows the frequencies of each of the Muni lines in the area.



Figure 1: Transit network map for the VV/P project area, as of September 2022

Transit network map







COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Table 1: Muni line frequencies

Transit line	Frequency		
T Third	Weekday: 9 – 15 mins	Weekend: 8 – 15 mins	
8 Bayshore/8AX/8BX	Weekday: 5 – 12 mins	Weekend: 8 – 12 mins	
9 San Bruno	Weekday: 10 – 13 mins;	Weekend: 10 – 15 mins	
9R San Bruno Rapid	Rapid morning-midmorning 12 mins	Weekend: 10 – 15 mins	
29 Sunset	Weekday: 10 – 15 mins	Weekend: 12 – 17 mins	
44 O'Shaughnessy	Weekday: 12 – 17 mins	Weekend: 12 – 17 mins	
54 Felton	Weekday: 20 – 30 mins	Weekend: 20 – 30 mins	
56 Rutland	Weekday: 20 mins	Weekend: 20 mins	
90 San Bruno Owl	Weekday: 30 mins	Weekend 30 mins	
91 3 rd St Owl	Weekday: 30 mins	Weekend: 30 mins	

COVID Impacts to Transit Service & Core Service Network

In April 2020, shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began and the city's Shelter in Place Health Order was issued, the SFMTA implemented the COVID-19 Muni Core Service Network reducing the number of routes in the Muni system from 79 to 17. The reduction in service was driven by a drop in staff availability and travel demand. The initial core service plan focused on maintaining service for essential trips and to maintain access to transit for 90% of San Francisco residents within one mile of a transit stop.

Since the implementation of the first Core Service Network in March 2020, the SFMTA has restored and increased service over the course of over more than 10 service changes. Between March 2020 and the fall of 2021, the SFMTA's ability to restore service levels was limited due to significant constraints on resources that were in place:

- **Vehicle Capacity**: COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, in place until June 2021, reduced transit vehicle capacity by two-thirds. SFMTA's approach was to allocate enough vehicles to a subset of higher ridership routes to support physical distancing.
- **Vehicle Availability**: Until mid-2021, the SFMTA's practice during the pandemic was to return vehicles at the end of each operator's shift for sanitization, which was more frequent than the industry standard of cleaning vehicles at the end of the day and resulted in fewer vehicles being available for service.
- **Staff Availability**: Due to a 15% vacancy rate pre-pandemic across the agency, and very limited hiring during the pandemic, the SFMTA has vacancies in many service-critical positions from mechanics to supervisors. Additionally, due to local vaccine mandates for city staff going into effect in late 2021 and deferred attrition through retirements and promotions, vacancies have further increased and are significantly impacting service recovery.

As of April 2022, all pre-pandemic lines serving the Visitacion Valley & Portola communities have been restored. The Transit Service Planning section of SFMTA continues to update and fine-tune routes and frequencies to get back to full pre-pandemic service across the entire transit network. The next Muni service update is expected in Winter 2023.



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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The Muni Transit Assistance Program, launched in 1996, trains and hires Transit Ambassadors to act as an unarmed safety presence on Muni lines. Transit Ambassadors are trained in conflict resolution, deter acts of vandalism, and assist bus operators and the public as needed. Transit Ambassadors historically are assigned to Muni lines serving middle schools and high schools, as violent confrontations often take place when buses become crowded immediately after school dismissal.

Within the VV/P project area, the 29 Sunset and 44 O'Shaughnessy lines have MTAP staffing.

Caltrain

The Bayshore Caltrain station is located Southeast of Visitacion Valley. Caltrain provides service from San Francisco to the Peninsula and South Bay. The Bayshore station is walking distance from the T Third, 8 Bayshore, 9 San Bruno, and 56 Rutland. Trains depart Bayshore both North and Southbound every 30 minutes to an hour on weekdays and every hour on weekends. Figure 2 shows the location of the Bayshore Caltrain station in relation to the closest Muni stops.

Caltrain is in the process of electrifying their trains from San Francisco to Tamien Station. This update would increase frequency to every 15 minutes during peak hours and operating speeds up to 79 mph. Electrification will help reduce emissions and noise from the currently diesel-hauled trains and improve the transit connection between San Francisco and the Peninsula. Passenger service on the electrified trains is anticipated mid-2024.



Figure 2: Bayshore Caltrain station location



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Community Input

The VV/P CBTP has so far completed two phases of public outreach. Input began with community interviews to collect preliminary input on engagement methods, transportation concerns, and design. Phase 1 identified and prioritized transportation challenges/needs and problem locations. Phase 2 confirmed Phase 1 outreach results and identified a range of capital projects across the project area. Input by the community on transit service and stop improvements were provided throughout via interviews, surveys, and comment cards.

Community Interviews

Community interviews were conducted at the beginning of the project in January and February 2021 to get input on outreach methods, understand potential barriers to participation in the community, build further connections, and discuss transportation concerns in the community. Twelve interviews were conducted, with twenty-one total participants. Many discussed elements of transit as a top transportation concern in their neighborhood. Some noted that Muni is a useful resource for them to get around for groceries and other errands and stated that many seniors rely on the buses. Many people in the community rely on transit; the range of identified needs included safety concerns, a desire for improved transit connections, and faster transit service.

One interviewee expressed concern that people often drive because public transportation in the area is too crowded and takes too long. Others noted safety concerns on the bus and at bus stops, especially related to the lack of lighting around bus stops. A few interviewees suggested adding digital rider information at bus stops because they feel unsafe using their smartphone at a bus stop to look up bus information.

A few community members discussed a need for better transit connections to the Peninsula, the Mission District, and to the Southeast.

Phase 1 Outreach

During phase 1 outreach, August 2021 through February 2022, residents were asked what modes of transportation they used and asked to check all that applied. Nearly 300 people indicated that they use Muni. The most popular Muni lines noted in the survey

Table 2: Muni lines ridden by phase 1 survey respondents

Muni Line	Responses
8 / 8AX / 8BX Bayshore	134
9/9R San Bruno	111
29 Sunset	69
44 O'Shaughnessy	53
T Third Street	46
54 Felton	32
56 Rutland	17
14 / 14R Mission	11
22 Fillmore	3
23 Monterey	3
18 46th Avenue	2
24 Divisadero	2
28 19th Avenue	2
38 Geary	2
48 Quintara/24th Street	2
49 Van Ness/Mission	2
1 California	1
2 Sutter	1
6 Haight/Parnassus	1
19 Polk	1
27 Bryant	1
31 Balboa	1
36 Teresita	1
45 Union/Stockton	1
52 Excelsior	1
58 Lake Merced	1
90 San Bruno Owl	1
91 3rd Street/19th Avenue Owl	1
12 Folsom/Pacific	1

were the 8/8AX/8BX, 9/9R, and 29. Full counts from the survey responses for "What nearby Muni lines do you take?" can be seen in Table 2.



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Over half (58%) of VV/P residents surveyed reported that they use Muni. Transit connectivity, reliability and safety ranked as high priorities in phase 1 outreach. Specifically, 50% of residents surveyed indicated that they want shorter travel times on Muni and safer bus stops.

Phase 2 Outreach

Phase 2 outreach extended from May 2022 through August 2022, collecting 279 surveys and 250 written comments. Four Muni stop improvements were proposed: San Bruno Avenue at Silver Avenue, Bacon Street at San Bruno Avenue, Mansell Street between San Bruno Avenue and Visitacion Avenue, and Hahn Street between Visitacion Avenue and Sunnydale Avenue. Phase 2 survey responses are below in Table 3:

Table 3: Phase 2 survey, transit project proposal responses

Location	Project proposal	"Very Desirable" or "Desirable"
Silver Avenue at San Bruno Avenue	Bus bulbs or sidewalk extensions at Muni stops	80%
Bacon Street at San Bruno Avenue	Bus bulbs or sidewalk extensions at Muni stops	80%
Mansell Street	Bus bulbs	73%
Hahn Street	New bus shelters, improved street lighting	69%

Three Phase 2 workshops were held with community partners. In Portola-based workshops, comments focused on San Bruno Avenue and the challenges of transit on the busy business corridor. Some residents expressed a desire for the 8 Bayshore to return to a previous alignment (before 2009) on Bayshore Blvd rather than on San Bruno Avenue. Other residents expressed opinions that increased transit service to Portola attracted homelessness and crime. Other residents expressed a desire for stop improvements and more transit shelters. In the Visitacion Valley-based workshop, comments focused on the quality of transit stops, especially adjacent to Sunnydale and Herz Playground. Residents also expressed concerns about personal safety, both while riding transit and while waiting for buses.

250 written comments were collected during Phase 2, with 41 of them were transit related. Comments requested seats at bus stops and safety/lighting improvements around and at bus stops, desired improvements to bus travel times, suggestions to relocate bus stops, and concern that other projects may slow down bus service.

One comment stated, "At Sweeny and Bowdoin St. it would be much safer to have a 4 way stop sign. This would help children walking to the school, others walking to the bus stop, and the left turns for families onto Sweeny." Another comment noted a missing bus stop on the 54 and an "unwalkable sidewalk" at Wayland and Hamilton.



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Recently Completed Muni Projects

The communities of VV/P have been a high priority for transit service improvements in the recent past. Documenting the most recently completed Muni projects helps to provide context for both upcoming projects, community input, and recommendations for future transit improvements.

San Bruno Multimodal Improvement Project

The San Bruno Avenue corridor through the Portola serves more than 50,000 daily transit riders, hosting some of the city's highest frequency transit lines. The corridor is also on the High Injury Network, and the congested San Bruno Avenue corridor often experiences transit delays due to double-parking vehicles and high demand for on-street parking.

The San Bruno Multimodal Improvement Project, started in 2015, sought to improve safety along the corridor for people walking and biking, improve reliability and travel times for transit riders, and reduce double parking through improved parking availability. The recommendations of the project were approved at the SFMTA Board of Directors in 2016. Recommended projects extended from the intersection of San Bruno Avenue at Arleta Avenue in the south to the intersection of San Bruno Avenue at Silver Avenue in the north. Projects along the corridor were implemented from 2017 to 2022.

Implemented project elements include:

- A new traffic signal at Felton Street
- Rapid flashing pedestrian beacons at Burrows Street and at Wayland Street
- Five transit bulbs at Silver Avenue, Thornton Avenue, Bacon Street (both sides), and Mansell Street. The installation of transit bulbs, at certain locations, allowed for the installation of transit shelters.
- Six pedestrian bulbs at Woolsey Street (three corners), Wayland Street (two corners), and Burrows Street (one corner).
- Turn pockets at Silver Avenue, Silliman Street, and Bacon Street to reduce intersection blocking by turning vehicles.
- Expansion of metered parking between Wayland Street and Woolsey Street

The project also approved, but has not yet implemented:

- Bike lanes from Mansell Street to Dwight Street
- Upgrades to high-visibility crosswalks
- Modifications of yellow curb commercial loading zones

In response to merchant feedback, some projects were modified to reduce the number of parking spaces removed along the corridor.





56 Rutland Extension

The northern part of the 56 Rutland was extended to Mansell Street in April of 2022 as part of the COVID-19 Muni Core Network service changes, providing a connection to the 29 Sunset and access to Burton High School on Mansell Street. The previous terminus of the 56 Rutland was on Visitacion Avenue next to Visitacion Middle School. Figure 3 shows the updated 56 Rutland bus route.



Figure 3: 56 Rutland route, as of April 2022

Muni Service Equity Strategy 2021/22 Projects

The 2021/22 Muni Service Equity Strategy identified 5 different proposals for improving transit service in Visitacion Valley. At the time of the publication of the 2023/24 Muni Service Equity Strategy, the following projects have been completed.

8/8AX/8BX Bayshore – Express service restored for 8AX/8BX.

<u>8/8AX/8BX Bayshore</u> – Existing transit lanes on Stockton and 4th Street colorized red.

<u>9 San Bruno</u> – Transit lanes extended on Market Street from 3rd Street to Main Street.



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

SFMTA Transit Commitments

The SFMTA is committed to improving transit across the city by reducing delays, adding rapid service, and prioritizing equity to identify and correct transit performance disparities. Muni's Hot Spot Program, Muni Forward, and the Muni Service Equity Strategy include ongoing projects that are working to meet these commitments in Visitacion Valley and Portola.

Muni Forward: 29 Sunset Improvement Project

The 29 Sunset is one of Muni's longest lines, extending nearly 14 miles from the Bayview to the Presidio. Figure 6 shows schools within a quarter mile of the 29 Sunset bus route. The route travels on Mansell Street and serves students Phillip and Sala Burton Academic School, El Dorado Elementary School, and Visitacion Valley Middle School. The 29 Sunset corridor is also part of the SFMTA's proposed "Five Minute Network" with the goal of providing service on the line every five minutes or more often with a potential 29R Sunset Rapid.

Recent improvements include the addition of special "school tripper" buses to help carry students to and from the numerous schools on the route.

The 29 Sunset Improvement Project aims to improve travel times and reliability for passengers along this route. The first

phase of the project is focused on the west side of the route, with potential improvements including:

- Transit-only lanes
- Queue jumps for transit vehicles at traffic signals
- Moving transit stops across intersections
- Transit signal priority for buses
- Bus bulbs or bus boarding islands
- Turn lanes or restrictions on left-turn movements
- New and enhanced transit shelters

Project recommendations are expected at the SFMTA Board in 2023 and implementation of Quick-Build projects across both the eastern and western portions of the route in late 2023 or early 2024. Start of construction of more permanent project elements is expected in 2025 or beyond.



Figure 4: 29 Sunset bus route and all school within a quarter mile

Implementation of a 29R Rapid line will be dependent on identifying sustainable operating funds.



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Muni Service Equity Strategy

The Muni Service Equity Strategy (MSES) was first adopted in 2016 and is updated every two years. The MSES represents the SFMTA's proactive commitment to identify and correct transit performance disparities in Equity Priority Communities. The current MSES was adopted in April 2022, representing a slate of projects and actions for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. Visitacion Valley is one of the nine neighborhoods identified in the MSES for focus.

Below are the service improvements planned for 2022 identified within the MSES. Some of these improvements have already been implemented at the time of this report's writing.

8 Bayshore

Restore 8AX/8BX on the corridor, which improves travel time for 8 Bayshore riders.

The 8AX/8BX returned to service on April 18, 2022.



Figure 5: Muni Service Equity Strategy

<u>9 San Bruno</u>

Increase vehicle capacity in Winter 2022; adjust frequency of service to align with operator availability. Restore frequency to 10-minute headways as resources are available.

The 9 San Bruno has a current weekday frequency of every 10 minutes. 60' 9R coaches run every 12 mins.

<u>29 Sunset</u>

Increase weekday frequency from 10 minutes to 9 minutes.

The 29 Sunset currently has 9-minute frequency during peak commute hours. In January 2023, the 29 Sunset will run every 9 minutes during the daytime

<u>56 Rutland</u>

Extend route to Burton High School on Mansell Street.

The 56 was extended on April 16, 2022.



COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Central Subway

The Central Subway, a hybrid on-street and underground light rail line from 4th and King to Chinatown, will soft launch on November 19. The launch will feature a weekend-only service plan between Rose Pak Chinatown and 4th/Brannan stations. Trains will also stop at Yerba Buena and Union Square stations, where riders can transfer to other Muni lines and BART. The service will be free through 2022. The regular T Third Line will continue to operate during this time. A map showing the two phases of opening the Central Subway can be seen in figure 6.

In January 2023, service will transition to a full seven-day-a-week service and the T Third Line will pick up the new connection. The new alignment will provide direct connections between Visitacion Valley, Bayview, Dogpatch, SoMa, downtown, and Chinatown. All the neighborhoods served by the T Third line will have a faster and more direct connection to regional transit. Central Subway will also expand job access to several critical neighborhoods in San Francisco, as well as provide rapid service to dense areas.



Hot Spot Program: 44 O'Shaughnessy

The Hot Spot program identifies locations within the citywide Muni transit system that cause the most delay to riders. The program focuses on simple improvements that can be implemented quickly, better to measure the effectiveness of interventions and bring relief to riders. In hotspot locations, Muni buses slow to an average of 4 miles per hour or less.

The 44 O'Shaughnessy was identified by the Hot Spot Program for improvements because the bus moves slowly on Silver Ave between San Bruno Ave and Bayshore Blvd due to traffic congestion, double parking and limited curb space. Figure 5 shows the 44 O'Shaughnessy Hot Spot project location.

Planned improvements, proposed for late 2022, include a bus zone extension, additional commercial loading zones, and a relocated short-term parking zone to allow for the bus to more easily, serve riders and move through the intersection. These improvements should improve both travel times and reliability for the entire 44 O'Shaughnessy line.

Figure 6: Central Subway route



Figure 7: 44 O'Shaughnessy Hot Spot project location





Future Transit Efforts

T-Third Study

The SFMTA applied for a grant with the Strategic Growth Council to conduct a speed and reliability assessment along the T Third line. The grant would fund outreach and planning for potential speed and reliability improvements along the T Third line from its southern terminus in Visitacion Valley up to Mission Bay. The grant includes outreach and planning, in partnership with San Francisco Transit Riders and Visitacion Valley community-based organizations. Recommendations that come out of this process would include Muni Forward engineering improvements that address sources of transit delay. Examples of potential improvements could include signal timing improvements, intersection design changes, turn restrictions, and filling gaps in the transit lanes. Grant award notifications are expected in late 2022.

Muni Forward 8 Bayshore

The Muni Forward plan has identified a potential future project along the 8 Bayshore corridor in Visitacion Valley. There is no current timeline, but it is anticipated that the project will be included in a future Capital Improvement Program – potentially 2025/2026. The project would include Muni Forward transit reliability and pedestrian safety improvements, such as transit bulbs and potential stop spacing updates. Some elements could be delivered sooner in coordination with the Sunnydale HOPE SF redevelopment project.

SFMTA Muni Service Update Winter 2023

The SFMTA plans to update the frequency of the 29 Sunset to 9 minutes all day in the coming months. The remaining 2022 Muni Service Network proposals will roll-out throughout 2023. This includes restoring the frequency of the 9R San Bruno Rapid to every 10 minutes on weekdays.

The SFMTA updates the Muni service network on a quarterly basis, adjusting route operating hours, frequencies, and route extents. The next service update is expected in January/February 2023.

Harney-101 Multimodal Crossing Project

The Harney-101 Multimodal Crossing Project, as part of the SFMTA Southeast Muni Expansion Project, seeks to improve transit access and service via an undercrossing improvement at Alana Way underneath Highway 101 as well as nearby streets. The Alana Way undercrossing, at the southeast edge of the CBTP project area, is one of the only streets providing access to the Executive Park and Candlestick Park development sites and has the potential to become a key gateway improving access to the Schlage and Baylands developments and the Bayshore Caltrain station. The undercrossing currently lacks bicycle, pedestrian, or transit facilities and cannot support the anticipated growth in the area.

The Harney-101 Multimodal Crossing Project identifies potential near-term improvements for bicycle & pedestrian travel, as well as the opportunity to convert an abandoned rail tunnel just south of the crossing to a one-way transit

Page 12





COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

only lane. The project is developing designs that could be compatible with a larger interchange reconfiguration if future growth and development justify it.

The SFMTA, in partnership with the SFCTA, is planning to begin community engagement in 2023. Additional funding and project staffing resources will need to be identified before recommendations can be implemented.



Task 4.2 Transit Action Plan Page 13

COMMUNITY BASED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Areas for future work

When assessing all Muni commitments, both short-term and long-term, within the project area for the VV/P CBTP, several themes emerge for addressing resident needs and concerns for transit access.

Transit Safety

Residents expressed concerns for safety and comfort when accessing and using transit. This included a desire for more lighting at transit stops and more bus shelters. Future Muni projects in this area should focus on potential placement for new shelters and assessment of lighting levels at existing transit stops. SFMTA could partner with SFDPW for pedestrian-scale lighting projects within the CBTP plan area that could benefit multiple transit lines. Especially in the Sunnydale community, any future changes to stop locations should consider instances of community violence.

Residents also expressed a desire for a safety presence on transit. This could be accomplished through additional staffing from the MTAP program on lines that serve the VV/P communities.

Responsive Scheduling

Increase service on the 29 Sunset and the 54 Felton when major events are taking place in McLaren Park.

Transit Information

Residents expressed a desire for more plentiful real-time information on transit. This could be accomplished through prioritizing VV/P communities for the roll-out of new transit arrival-time signage.

Safe Routes to Transit

Many resident comments remarked on the condition of sidewalks and the lack of accessible curb ramps on walking routes to transit stops. The VV/P CBTP Streetscape Plan requires multiple projects to upgrade crosswalks near transit stops. Sidewalk repaving projects would need to be coordinated and funded through SF DPW.

Balancing Community Priorities

Community input was divided on transit service along the San Bruno Avenue corridor. While some residents wanted continued improvements to the lines currently serving the corridor, other residents wanted some Muni lines routed off San Bruno Avenue. This is reflective of the scale of activity on this high-demand corridor. Future transit projects should look expansively at the management of curb space and other measures to balance the needs and uses on this corridor.

Transit Connections

While many concerns will be addressed by ongoing Muni work, especially with the Central Subway improving the transit connection to Chinatown, the community also expressed a need for better connections to the Mission.

