

# **Ad Hoc Transportation Committee Phase II Report and Recommendations**

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## ***Introduction***

The Foster City Ad Hoc Transportation Committee has developed the following recommendations for Council's consideration. These recommendations are intended as Phase II of a two-part initiative to develop recommendations for a comprehensive transportation plan for Foster City. While Phase I focused on serving community needs (especially the needs of youth and people with limited mobility), Phase II is intended to address the needs of individuals commuting into and out of Foster City for work.

In Phase II as in Phase I, the Committee set the following four goals for a transportation plan:

- Convenience: Making it easier to choose alternative transportation options
- Accessibility: Increasing transportation options for people with mobility issues and people with disabilities
- Sustainability: Promoting alternative transportation as a method of reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions
- Traffic Congestion Reduction: Working to remove automobiles from Foster City's streets

Due to the regional nature of commute hour travel patterns, many of the Phase II recommendations focus upon coordinating with existing agencies and continuing to evaluate the City's current services for improvement opportunities. These efforts should be aimed at streamlining the speed and connectivity of alternative transportation options, while also engaging the public through outreach and education about regional transportation options.

The Committee also paid careful attention to one of the primary reasons that many parents drive alone to work: the transport of non-driving students to and from school and before and after school activities. Several recommendations are meant to encourage students and parents to examine the feasibility of using alternative transportation in their daily routines.

The Phase II recommendations have been sorted into the following categories:

- Coordinate With Employers and Public Transit Agencies to Provide More Comprehensive Service
- Improve Connectivity between Services and Modes
- Provide Working Parents with Alternative Options for Transporting Children to School
- Engage in Public Outreach and Education
- Increase Convenience for Those not Commuting by Car
- Continue Evaluating Current Services

## How to Read the Recommendations

The recommendations listed below are in a format similar to the format used for the Phase I Recommendations. Each recommendation summary contains the following elements:

*Recommendation:* The recommendation being made to the City

*Reason for Recommendation:* Why the Committee has selected this recommendation to appear in this report.

*Action Required:* What the City needs to do in order to begin work on the item

*Resources Required:* A rough estimate of the cost and staff resources required for the item. More detailed information on the cost of each item will be provided by staff as implementation of prioritized recommendations occurs.

Each recommendation also contains a table summarizing the impact of the recommendation. The following items are included in this table:

**Cost:** The cost of the recommendation is sorted into three categories: <\$3000; \$3000 - \$30,000; >\$30,000. If more detailed cost information is available, it appears in the “Resources Required” section of the recommendation summary.

**Funding:** If there is a known or suggested source of funding for the recommendation, it will be mentioned here.

**Complexity:** Complexity of each item is sorted into Low/Medium/High, based upon the required staff time, political will, and coordination with other agencies.

**Time Frame:** A rough estimate of how long the recommendation will take to implement as measured from the time that Staff begins to formally study and consider it.

**1. Coordinate With Employers and Public Transit Agencies to Provide More Comprehensive Service**

**1.1 Coordinate with Employers to Expand Shuttle Service**

*Recommendation:* Work with local employers, particularly those with currently underutilized private shuttles, to expand the Alliance-managed employer shuttle system by offering more frequent service and/or increasing service hours.

*Reason for Recommendation:* This recommendation is a result of the conclusions reached by the Employer Working Group (See Appendix A). As ridership has increased on the employer shuttle routes, and as there is currently a certain level of redundancy due to the operation of several private shuttle routes, the Group urged the City to continue to work with the Alliance and with area employers to continue to improve the employer shuttle system.

*Action Required:* Staff will continue to engage with employers, particularly those that participated in the Employer Working Group. Staff will also study funding possibilities, such as new grant funding, expanded or new employer funding, developer contributions, or City funding.

*Resources Required:* Staff time to coordinate with businesses and the Alliance; potential monetary contribution to planning or operating new shuttle routes.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Varies	Potential	Moderate	1-5 years

**1.2 Evaluate Potential for Shared Shuttles**

*Recommendation:* Consider working with local businesses to share existing privately operated shuttle service directly to San Francisco (such as Visa’s inter-campus shuttle system).

Also, work with private non-profits such as the PJCC to fully utilize shuttle bus capacity, which would otherwise be unused, by sharing vans and other vehicles to provide service to transportation hubs from Foster City neighborhoods (This recommendation is similar to non-prioritized recommendation OT8 in the Phase I report).

*Reason for Recommendation:* Visa currently provides a shuttle between its San Francisco and Foster City campuses, which is open to Visa employees only. Several other Bay Area businesses have similar programs, although Visa’s is the only Foster City program known to City Staff. The Committee believes that it would be more efficient

to offer jointly operated service between Foster City and Downtown San Francisco, which would be open to employees of any Foster City business as well as Foster City residents. Obstacles to this include the existence of similar, though less-direct, service; the assumption of liability among the joint providers; and the cost of providing such a service daily.

*Action Required:* City Staff would need to engage in discussion with potential participants to gauge interest, and would also need to examine risk management aspects of the enterprise.

*Resources Required:* The cost of operating another shuttle system, especially if not grant-funded, would likely be significant. Cost sharing with private businesses could help mitigate some of the cost, but using the hourly rate for the Blue Line shuttle (\$55), the total cost of this program would likely be over \$100,000 annually, although it would not necessarily be City-operated or City-funded. Other funding sources could include participating employers, off-setting fares, or inquiring as to whether others would open existing services to the general public.

Cost	Funding	Complexity	Time Frame
> \$30,000	Unknown	High	5+ Years

### 1.3 Continue to Advocate for Commute Hour Service

*Recommendation:* Support and advocate for commute hour service provided by SamTrans, including the commute hour route to replace the FX express bus to San Francisco.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Commute hour service has the greatest potential to gather a critical mass of riders willing to use transit instead of a single passenger vehicle. On December 20, 2009 SamTrans replaced the FX express bus to San Francisco with Route 359, which serves the same stops in Foster City but terminates at Millbrae Intermodal Station instead of in downtown San Francisco. The City should continue to work with SamTrans to maintain commute hour service to Foster City in the interest of furthering the City's transportation and environmental sustainability goals. City Staff will continue to engage with SamTrans regarding the ridership of Route 359 and how the City can help to promote this new service.

*Action Required:* City Staff would need to continue to engage in conversations with SamTrans and help SamTrans promote current commute hour services.

*Resources Required:* As a recommendation to engage in advocacy, this item would require staff time, but few financial resources.

Cost	Funding	Complexity	Time Frame
< \$3000	N/A	Low	Ongoing

#### 1.4 Promote and Increase Service to Hillsdale Caltrain Station and Millbrae Intermodal Station

*Recommendation:* Examine options for increasing overall commute-hour service to Hillsdale Caltrain, including expanding Connections Shuttle hours, promoting and expanding employer shuttles, and promoting SamTrans' commute hour services.

*Reason for Recommendation:* As stated above, commute hour transportation represents the largest population of "choice" transit users (transit users who have access to private automobiles) in Foster City. This recommendation requests staff support in examining ways to increase commute-hour service to regional transportation. Samtrans Routes 359 and 251 provide connections to BART and Caltrain, respectively, while the Connections Shuttle and Alliance-managed employer shuttles also connect to regional rail.

*Action Required:* City Staff would need to engage in discussion with SamTrans and Caltrain to coordinate promotional efforts. Promotional and public outreach materials would need to be designed and/or distributed by staff.

*Resources Required:* Funding for promotional materials, as well as potential additional funding for shuttle expansion (shuttles have a high probability of attracting additional grant funding).

Cost	Funding	Complexity	Time Frame
< \$3000	Potential	Moderate	Ongoing

#### 1.5 Advocate for Continued Transbay Service

*Recommendation:* Advocate for continued transbay service to Hayward via AC Transit Line M and work with AC Transit to continue meeting the needs of transbay commuters. Also encourage AC Transit to continue service to Redwood Shores and to accept transfers and passes from SamTrans.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Many employees who work in Foster City, as well as some residents, rely on AC Transit's M Line to cross the bay. As the only public transportation available across the San Mateo-Hayward bridge, it provides a vital link between the Peninsula and the East Bay. Due to budget concerns, AC Transit recently decreased service along this line, removing stops south of Redwood Shores and stopping service to all stops 1.5 hours earlier in the evening. City Staff should communicate with AC Transit to maintain service along this route.

*Action Required:* Staff would need to engage in communication with AC Transit, help to promote the service in the City's promotional materials, and inform the public about the service. The City should officially comment on future proposed service changes.

*Resources Required:* Staff time to engage with AC Transit.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
< \$3000	None	Low	Ongoing

## **2. Improve Connectivity between Services and Modes**

### **2.1 Support Infrastructure Improvements Benefitting Foster City in Other Jurisdictions**

*Recommendation:* Support any planned improvements to infrastructure that will aid Foster City's transportation goals. This includes any planned bicycle or pedestrian improvements along major San Mateo corridors such as Hillsdale Blvd., planned traffic improvements along major thoroughfares, and any improvements to station design at Hillsdale Caltrain Station including changes affecting those transferring from SamTrans buses.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Drive times between Foster City and the main North-South transit corridor along El Camino Real can be long. The corridor can also be dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly when navigating highway overpasses. While the City can do little to mitigate traffic and safety issues outside its jurisdiction, it can support planned improvements along this thoroughfare with the appropriate agencies as their resources allow. Similar action can be taken with any planned changes to the area surrounding Hillsdale Caltrain Station, as well as bicycle/pedestrian improvements that would allow better non-automobile access to Foster City.

*Action Required:* Staff will need to be aware of future development proposals in other agencies, engage in appropriate discussions, and support these agencies in seeking funding and political will.

*Resources Required:* As the primary cost of improvements would not fall upon Foster City, staff time would be the only requirement.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
< \$3000	None	High	Ongoing

### **2.2 Investigate Logistics of Transportation Hub**

*Recommendation:* Investigate solutions for creating a transportation hub within Foster City Civic Center. Items to study include:

- Precise hub location
- Parking requirements
- Accommodations for other modes, such as electric vehicles, car sharing systems, and bicycles.
- Any necessary route changes to Connections Shuttle or Employer Shuttles
- Coordination with SamTrans and AC Transit
- Signage and branding of a new area
- Public information about the new area

*Reason for Recommendation:* In its Phase I Recommendations, the Transportation Committee supported a transportation hub located at Shell Blvd. and E. Hillsdale Blvd. Currently, neither this intersection or the surrounding Civic Center area is well designed to handle transfers or accommodate “Park-and-Ride” transit users. City Staff will need to examine the logistics of parking and transferring before a hub can be realized. Alternative strategies may include not making infrastructure changes while instead re-branding and educating the public as to the comparatively high level of transit service in this area. Opportunities may also change as the 15-acre site is developed.

*Action Required:* City Manager, Public Works and Community Development staff will need to study the requirements of branding the intersection as a hub, and of accommodating the expected number of riders.

*Resources Required:* This item may eventually require construction or new signage. It will also require significant staff time for study of current conditions and needed improvements. Staff may wish to investigate federal or state funding for this project.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Needs further study (Very High)	Unknown	High	5+ Years

### **2.3 Investigate Traffic Light Priority for Transit**

*Recommendation:* Examine feasibility of allowing shuttles and buses to pre-empt traffic signals on major thoroughfares such as E. Hillsdale Boulevard. Study SamTrans’ pilot program with buses on El Camino Real.

The Committee has agreed that this item should be very low priority, and that emphasis should be placed upon investigation rather than the realization of this recommendation.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Buses take longer to make a given trip than a personal automobile because of the need to stop frequently. Allowing transit vehicles to pre-empt traffic signals (using similar technology to that in emergency services vehicles) can reduce travel times, and make bus travel more attractive relative to the private automobile.

*Action Required:* Staff would need to study the cost, benefits and safety of traffic signal pre-emption. If the City decides to move forward, technology would need to be installed on the pertinent vehicles (this would include coordinating with other transit providers such as AC Transit and SamTrans), and additional traffic studies will need to be performed. Staff will also need to investigate whether existing Opticom technology can be used with non-emergency vehicle signals, and whether existing technology can be used between agencies.

*Resources Required:* Staff time, funding for traffic studies, funding for installation of technology. Without substantial funding, this item is unlikely to be realized, especially given the coordination required between agencies and the relatively low utilization of East-West corridors by local transportation agencies.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
> \$30,000	Unknown	High	5+ Years

### **3. Provide Working Parents with Alternative Options for Transporting Children to School**

#### **3.1 Promote Transportation Alternatives for School**

*Recommendation:* Encourage parents and children to travel to school using alternative transportation such as walking, biking, or carpooling. Utilize the case studies provided by the Safe Routes to School program and work to increase the safety and attractiveness of the above transportation options.

*Reason for Recommendation:* One of the primary logistical barriers to many individuals who would like to use alternative transportation in their commute is accommodating trips to drop off and pick up children for school and other activities. By encouraging parents to allow their children to participate in alternative transportation programs such as walking and biking “school buses” and carpools, more adult commuters will be able to utilize alternative transportation in their own daily lives. The City can also assist by working with schools to ensure that traffic conditions are well-managed during pick-up and drop-off hours, and by involving individual PTA’s in education efforts.

*Action Required:* Staff would need to study current programs and coordinate with the San Mateo-Foster City School District in initiating and promoting any new programs. The City should also publicize an Alliance program providing gas cards to people who carpool to school.

*Resources Required:* This item will require staff time to investigate program and funding options. Final cost will depend upon funding availability and expansiveness of final program; the cost estimate in the following table is very preliminary.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
\$3,000 - \$30,000	Unknown	Moderate	1-5 Years

#### **3.2 Expand Bike Lanes, Paths and Routes**

*Recommendation:* Extend the current bike system, particularly near all Foster City schools.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Expansion of bike lanes will encourage residents to cycle more often to school and work, and may provide additional security for cyclists. Priority should be given to areas around schools, as a way of encouraging more children to bike to school while possibly allowing parents to accompany them.

*Action Required:* City staff would need to study feasibility of bike lanes or routes along the relevant roadways, and, if the City agrees to move forward, would need to re-stripe street and educate public.

*Resources Required:* This will require funding for re-striping the street and/or signage, depending on whether a lane or route is installed. Lanes on some streets may require street widening.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
\$30,000+	Unknown	High	1-5 years

## 4. Engage in Public Outreach and Education

### 4.1 Increase Cycling Promotion

*Recommendation:* Engage in heightened outreach and education on cycling to and from work or school.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Foster City is a flat, small city with temperate weather, and is therefore ideal for bicycle traffic. City Staff should work to increase its level of public outreach and education regarding cycling and actively promote it as a zero-Carbon, healthy, socially responsible means of transportation to work, school, recreation, and errands.

*Action Required:* Staff would need to develop and implement a public outreach plan to encourage bicycling. This includes educating people on bicycle safety and traffic laws, as well as publicizing (and possibly re-signing) bike paths, lanes, and routes through Foster City and beyond (see recommendation 3.2).

*Resources Required:* Depending on the level of outreach, some financial resources will be necessary to fund the publicity programs. This can be adjusted based on the City's willingness to engage in these programs, and some seed money can be taken from the FY2009-2010 Transportation Initiatives budget.

Cost	Funding	Complexity	Time Frame
< \$3000	Unknown	Low	Ongoing

### 4.2 Continue to Engage in Public Education about Commute Alternatives

*Recommendation:* Continue outreach and education about alternative transportation options for both residents and local businesses, especially those residents who commute to work outside of Foster City.

*Reason for Recommendation:* This recommendation serves as an umbrella for many others regarding public outreach. The City must remain in communication with all the transportation-users and trip-creators within its bounds.

*Action Required:* Staff can continue current promotional efforts, including partnerships with the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance, and explore venues for continuing to spread information about transportation alternatives.

*Resources Required:* Staff support and funding for educational materials/outreach.

Cost	Funding	Complexity	Time Frame
Varies	Unknown	Moderate	Ongoing

## **5. Increase Convenience for Those Not Commuting by Car**

### **5.1 Examine Alternative Vehicle Service for Commuters**

*Recommendation:* Examine ways to provide convenient mid-day transportation services to those working in Foster City who do not drive to work. This may include partnering with local businesses to offer car sharing services and launching educational campaigns.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Many commuters drive to work in order to use their car to run errands or go to lunch during the day. By providing some sort of mid-day transportation options, the City can encourage commuters to use alternative transportation.

*Action Required:* City staff would need to investigate potential grant funding, risk management, and logistical issues, as well as determine if the City is the best entity to manage this program. Staff will need to conduct outreach to gauge interest of various businesses, as well as interest of various carsharing services.

*Resources Required:* Ultimately the cost of this item would depend on the solution implemented. Ideally, this would not be a high-cost option for the City.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<\$3000	Unknown	High	5+ Years

## **6. Continue Evaluating Current Services**

### **6.1 Survey Community and Businesses**

*Recommendation:* Engage residents, employees and employers in a survey of their transit usage and their receptiveness toward trying transit.

*Reason for Recommendation:* Many of the Committee's other recommendations can be evaluated for interest prior to the start of implementation by surveying both Foster City residents and people who work in Foster City but reside elsewhere.

*Action Required:* Staff will need to design (a) survey(s) and distribute. Alternatively, a consultant could be hired to do the surveying.

*Resources Required:* Staff time, cost of distributing survey and tabulating results, or the cost of a consultant.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Varies	None	Moderate	0-1 Years

## **7. Comments to be noted and added to Phase I recommendations**

### **7.1 Utilize City-owned Vehicles when Not in Use**

*Recommendation:* Utilize shuttle vehicles that are not in use to provide transportation services for Parks & Recreation programs such as sporting events, trips to parks, and senior programs.

*Reason for Recommendation:* While Parks & Recreation already utilizes the Senior Express vehicle for excursions and for charter, this item recommends that any future vehicles be used similarly if owned by the City.

*Action Required:* No additional action required at this time.

*Resources Required:* Additional operating costs for vehicle

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Will vary	None	Moderate	N/A

## ***Appendix A: Employer Working Group Recommendations***

### **EMPLOYER WORKING GROUP ON WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION**

## **Recommendations to the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee**

The Foster City Employer Working Group on Workforce Transportation has assembled the following recommendations following an exploration of the issues facing individuals commuting to Foster City.

The Working Group membership included the following organizations:

City of Foster City  
Costco  
Equity Office Management  
Foster City Chamber of Commerce  
Life Technologies  
Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance  
Rearden Commerce  
Sares Regis International  
Sony Computer Entertainment America  
Visa

As every employer faces unique challenges and possesses varying resources, the following recommendations are intended to serve as broad a population as possible while also falling within the scope of the City's responsibilities.

Representatives from these organizations met for a total of five meetings, examining possible improvements in the commuter shuttle system, bicycle amenities, carpooling and vanpooling participation, and public education. After considering the obstacles facing the typical commuter, the Group assembled the following 11 recommendations for consideration by the Ad Hoc Transportation Committee and the City Council.

#### **Shuttle Recommendations**

1. Work with employers and the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance to expand the current employer shuttle program to increase the convenience of the service for the average commuter. This includes expanding hours, changing stop locations, and decreasing headways.
2. Encourage more businesses to participate financially in the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance shuttle program.
3. Engage with the community and keep employer shuttles open to residents wishing to ride in the reverse direction.

### Bicycle Recommendations

4. Work with City of San Mateo and/or CalTrans to make the ride on East Hillsdale Boulevard to El Camino Real safer for bicyclists, especially the Highway 101 overcrossing.
5. Make surface improvements on the Levee Pedway to improve bicycle safety.
6. Increase the availability of bike lockers in accessible and secure locations.

### Carpool and Vanpool Recommendations

7. Encourage employees at multiple Foster City employers to carpool or vanpool together through the use of company website-embedded 511.org tools and cross-organization coordination.

### Promotion and Outreach Recommendations

8. Engage with local businesses to promote alternative transportation programs such as the shuttle program, other commute.org programs, Enterprise vanpools, 511 ridematching and federal tax benefits.
9. Create a packet for both new and existing employers promoting available options for encouraging the use of alternative transportation.
10. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to host a free seminar for businesses on commute options.
11. Continue to engage with the business community and stay aware of their evolving needs, concerns, and wishes.