



DATE: October 21, 2014

CATEGORY: New Business

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **Community Shuttle Pilot Program**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Google to provide community shuttle program services, as well as make any minor amendments, including extensions, to the agreement.
2. Direct staff to return to the City Council with an overview and update regarding the community shuttle pilot program after it has been in operation for one year.

BACKGROUND

Previous Community Shuttle Discussion/Input

The idea of operating a community shuttle has been a topic of both community and City Council discussion on and off for the past several years as a transportation alternative for residents whose mobility needs are not currently being addressed with the transportation services available in the City.

Provided below is a summary of City Council discussions during the past several years regarding the potential for implementing community shuttle services in the community:

- March 4, 2008 Study Session – Discussion regarding shuttle services provided in neighboring communities and operating scenarios/cost information for potential shuttle operations in Mountain View.
- December 6, 2011 Study Session – Review of updated community shuttle information and Council input regarding the proposed goals and a scope for a potential community shuttle program to serve Mountain View.

- February 28, 2012 Council Meeting— Council consideration of a proposed process to explore the need for, and feasibility of, a community shuttle service.
- October 23, 2012 Council Meeting— Presentation of additional shuttle-related research and the results of an online survey conducted to gauge the community’s interest in a possible community shuttle program in Mountain View.

A total of 248 surveys were submitted to the City. While not a statistically valid sampling, the survey yielded the following useful information:

- Desired community shuttle destinations:
 - Shopping destinations, particularly the San Antonio Shopping Center area and downtown/Castro Street.
 - Entertainment/social destinations, including the downtown/Castro Street area and movie theater complex on North Shoreline Boulevard.
 - City/community facilities, particularly the Mountain View Public Library and downtown/Castro Street/Civic Center area.
- The desired frequency of service is every 30 minutes or less.
- More than 90 percent of survey respondents indicated a willingness to walk as many as five blocks to reach a shuttle service stop.

Initial Proposed Community Shuttle Pilot Program

To further support the City Council’s ongoing focus on improving bicycle, pedestrian, and other forms of mobility in the community, Google representatives contacted City officials offering to fund a pilot community shuttle program. A summary of other community contributions by Google can be found in Attachment 1.

Based on the community input received in 2012 and previous community shuttle service discussions, City staff worked with Google staff and representatives from ALTRANS, the company Google has retained to manage the daily operations and customer service needs for the community shuttle pilot program, to develop a proposed route and service plan for a community shuttle pilot program.

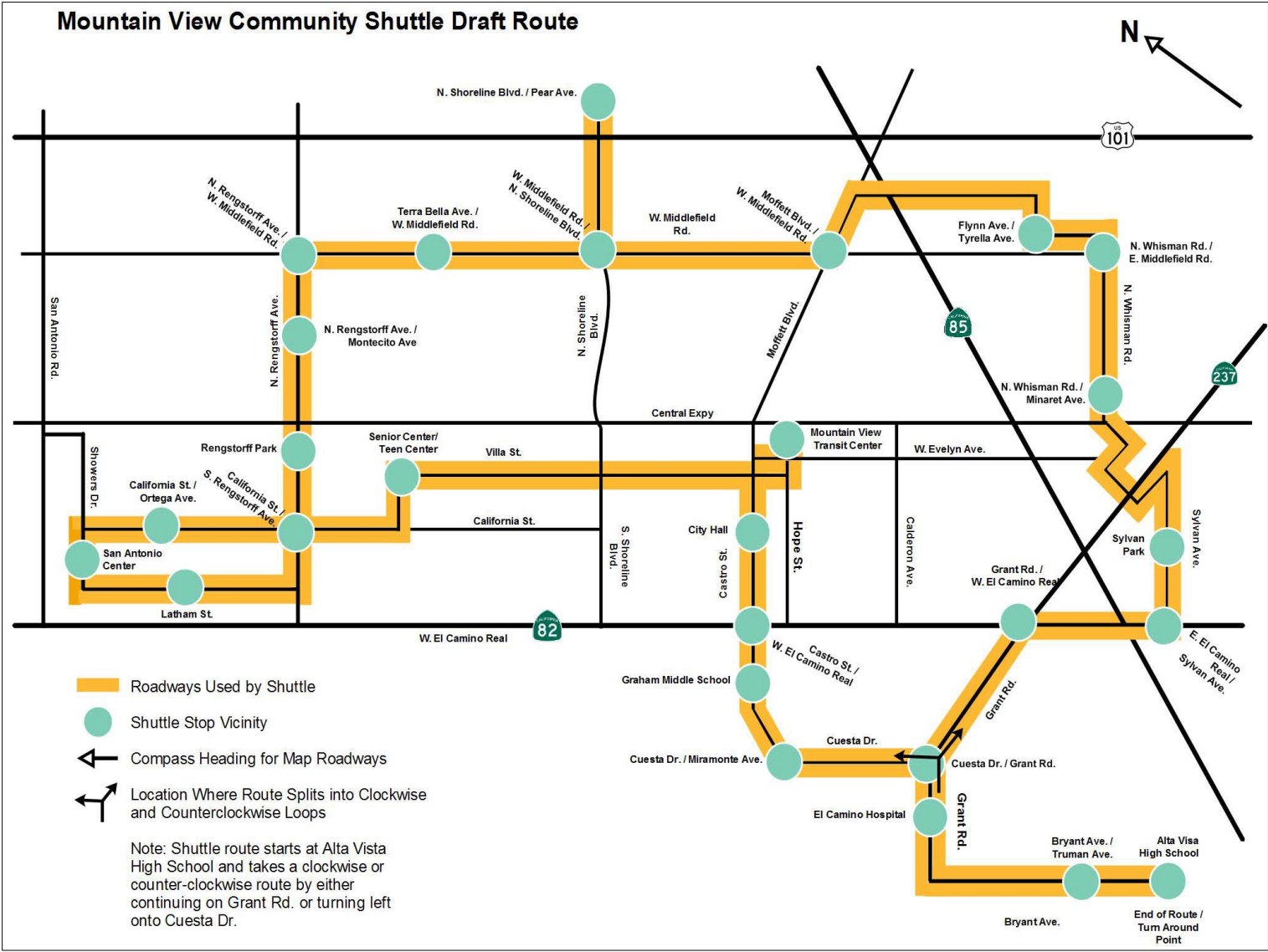
The community shuttle would begin as a two-year pilot program fully funded by Google and will automatically be renewed for an additional year unless either the City

or Google decide to terminate the program. Throughout the term of the pilot program, the City will fine-tune the shuttle route and stop locations based on rider feedback and will also collect ridership data to assess the demand for shuttle services.

An initial proposed shuttle service and route (Figure 1) was presented at a community meeting held on August 12, 2014 and included the following key attributes:

- Four electric shuttles traveling the proposed shuttle route—two in a clockwise direction and two in a counterclockwise direction—serving each proposed shuttle stop location at estimated 30-minute intervals on weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and once an hour between 12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays.
- The shuttle vehicles will be equipped with seating for 16 passengers, a wheelchair lift, space for two wheelchairs, WiFi connectivity, and bicycle racks on the outside.
- The shuttle route included 27 destination locations with a total of 51 shuttle stops (stops on both sides of a street at most locations), connecting residential areas throughout the community to:
 - Downtown Mountain View, including the Center for the Performing Arts, Castro Street stores and restaurants, and the Mountain View Public Library.
 - Other regional transit services at the Downtown Mountain View Transit Center and San Antonio Transit Center.
 - City and community facilities, including the Senior Center, Teen Center, parks, and both sports centers.
 - Shopping at San Antonio Center, Grant Road and El Camino Real, El Camino Real and The Americana, and Blossom Valley.
 - El Camino Hospital and nearby medical offices, and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation.
 - The movie theater complex on North Shoreline Boulevard.

Figure 1 – Initial Proposed Community Shuttle Route (August 2014)



Approximately 45 members of the public attended the community meeting. A summary of the comments/suggestions received at the meeting is provided in Attachment 2.

A summary of the comments that have been received to date through the Community Shuttle page on the City's website is provided in Attachment 3.

ANALYSIS

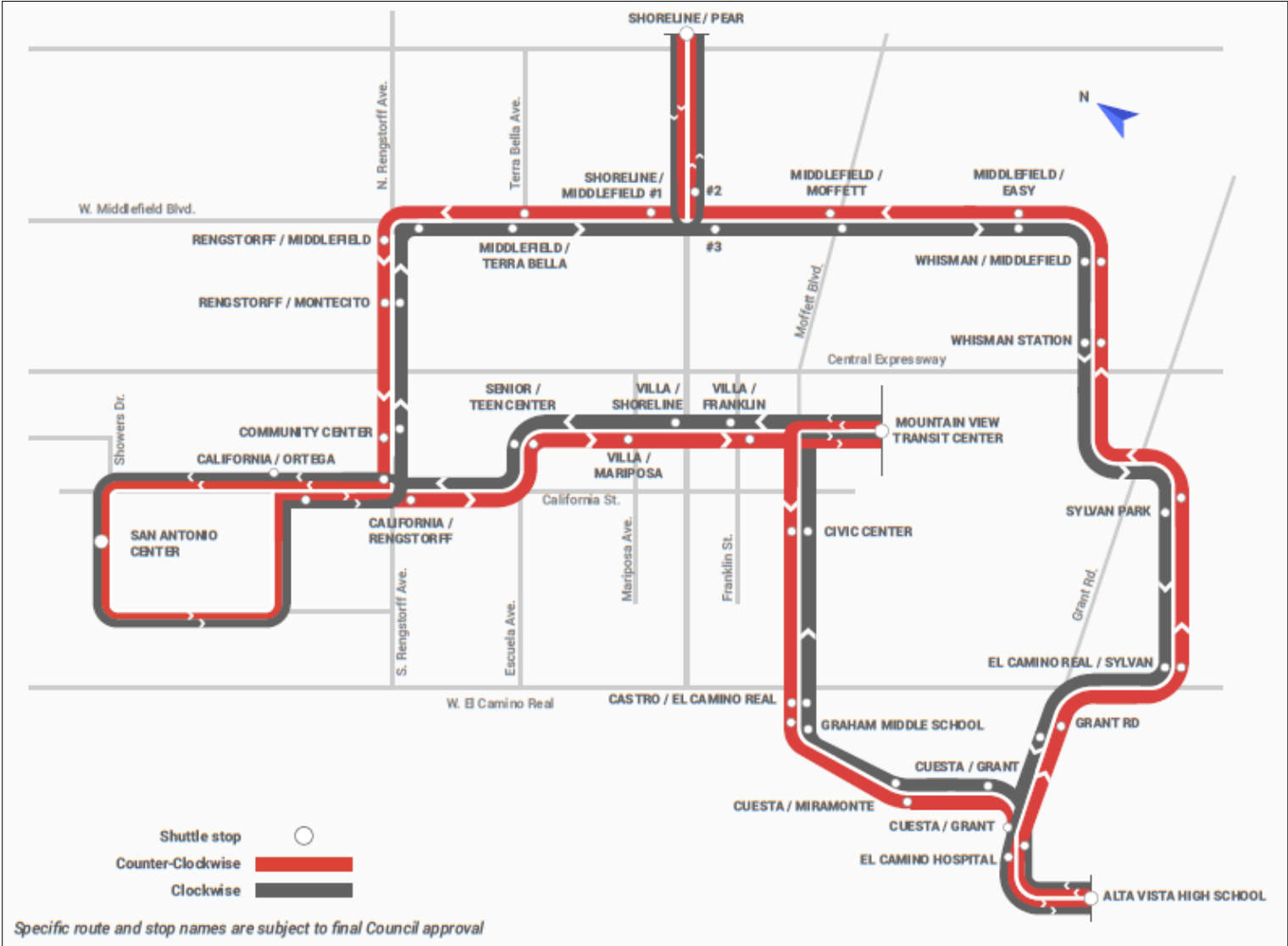
Revised Community Shuttle Pilot Program

Route Modifications

Based on input received from the community, and further evaluation of the proposed shuttle route, staff has revised the route (Figure 2) and program as follows:

- Shuttle service and stops in the Flynn Avenue/Tyrella Avenue neighborhood have been shifted off Walker Drive, Tyrella Avenue, and Flynn Avenue to East Middlefield Road, a larger arterial street, to reduce shuttle traffic impacts to the residential neighborhood and travel times. New shuttle stops are proposed at existing VTA bus stops at East Middlefield Road and Easy Street to serve this area of the City.
- Two additional shuttle stops have been added on the north and south sides of West Middlefield Road west of Shoreline Boulevard (one at an existing VTA bus stop and one new stop location) so that shuttle vehicles traveling through the intersection in all directions will be served by a shuttle stop.
- Service along Villa Street has been enhanced with additional stops:
 - Near the intersection of Villa and Franklin Streets to serve the new housing and other development in the immediate area.
 - A new counterclockwise stop at the northwest corner of Shoreline Boulevard at an existing VTA bus stop.
 - A new clockwise stop at the intersection of Villa Street and Mariposa Avenue to serve the residential neighborhoods in the area.

Figure 2—Proposed Community Shuttle Route



- Shuttle service and stops along Latham Street have been modified to reduce shuttle traffic impacts to the residential neighborhood. Shuttle buses will no longer travel the length of Latham Street between Showers Drive and Rengstorff Avenue, and the previously proposed shuttle stops on Latham Street have been removed. Shuttle buses will travel on Latham Street only between Showers Drive and Ortega Avenue and will make no stops in the neighborhood.
- The previously proposed shuttle stop in front of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office near the intersection of Showers Drive and Latham Street has been eliminated. All shuttles in the San Antonio Shopping Center area will be traveling in a counterclockwise direction and will use an existing bus bay at the VTA's San Antonio Transit Center facility.
- The proposed shuttle stops on Bryant Avenue near Truman Avenue have been eliminated because of their close proximity to the proposed stop at Alta Vista High School and the terminus/turnaround point for the shuttle route.
- Two additional shuttle vehicles have been added to the fleet (new total of six shuttle vehicles) to serve as replacement vehicles during required driver break periods and/or when shuttles in service reach their distance/charging limitations and need to go offline to be recharged. This will allow four shuttle vehicles to remain in service at all times during shuttle operating hours.

Service Frequency and Travel Times

The estimated frequency of weekday shuttle service with the revised route is 38 minutes. The change in estimated frequency of service reflects a more realistic assessment of traffic conditions throughout the day, the number of stops being served, required driver break periods, vehicle recharging requirements, and distances to be traveled – all of which impact the frequency of service.

Service frequency on weekends and holidays will be approximately every 75 minutes.

Service frequency on the proposed route could be improved if the most peripheral stops are eliminated:

Stop(s) to be Considered for Elimination	Revised Estimated Weekday Service Frequency (minutes)	Revised Estimated Weekend/Holiday Service Frequency (minutes)
Shoreline Boulevard/Pear Avenue	29	65
Alta Vista High School	31	70
Shoreline Boulevard/Pear Avenue <u>and</u> Alta Vista High School	22	61

If the Shoreline Boulevard/Pear Avenue (movie theater complex) stop is eliminated, shuttles would not turn onto Shoreline Boulevard, but rather travel along Middlefield Road. Only shuttles going out of service for driver breaks and/or recharging at the facility located on Crittenden Lane would travel on Shoreline Boulevard.

If the Alta Vista High School stop is eliminated, shuttles would turn around at El Camino Hospital and continue back along Grant Road.

Sample weekday travel times between selected destinations on the revised shuttle route are provided below. Riders may be able to reduce their travel times between some destinations depending if they board a shuttle traveling in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction.

**Proposed Single-Loop Shuttle Route
 Sample Estimated Weekday Travel Times**

Start	End	Shortest Weekday Travel Time (minutes)	Direction*
San Antonio Center	Downtown Transit Center	13	CCW
Rengstorff/Montecito	El Camino Hospital	34	CCW
Sylvan Park	City Hall	24	CW
Grant Road	Senior Center	31	CW
Senior Center	Shoreline/Pear	24	CW
Middlefield/Easy	Downtown Transit Center	33	CW
Rengstorff/Montecito	Senior Center	16	CCW
Senior Center	City Hall	10	CCW
El Camino Hospital	Cuesta/Miramonte	3	CW
Whisman/Middlefield	El Camino Real/Sylvan	6	CW

* Clockwise Direction (CW), Counterclockwise Direction (CCW)

To provide riders with the information they will need to select the shuttle bus/route that best meets their travel needs, route maps, shuttle stop signs, and vehicle signage will be color-coded and include directional information so that riders can more easily identify the shuttle they want to take.

The proposed modifications to revised shuttle route address some, but not all, of the changes that have been suggested by the community. Some of the requested modifications that have not been made include:

- Extended Service Hours – Requests to extend service hours beyond those currently proposed could not be accommodated within the funding Google is committing to the start of the community shuttle pilot program.

- Additional Shuttle Stop Locations—Additional service and/or stops in outlying areas of the City (e.g., Charleston Plaza, Shoreline at Mountain View Park) have not been added because lengthening the route further would result in less-frequent shuttle service.

Requests for additional stops and service along El Camino Real, California Street, and Moffett Boulevard have not been incorporated into the revised route to avoid duplicating VTA bus service currently operating on those streets.

Staff estimates that shuttle service operations will begin in January 2015. Although a fall 2014 launch of the community shuttle program had been initially planned, additional time has been needed to: bring required contractors on-board; fine-tune and test the proposed shuttle route and stop locations; secure the shuttle vehicles; design, fabricate, and install the signage at the stop locations; and develop and implement the branding program supporting the shuttle program (e.g., website, printed materials, etc.).

Modifications to the shuttle route and service frequency will likely be needed on downtown event days (e.g., Spring Parade, Thursday Night Live, Art and Wine Festival, A La Carte and Art, Holiday Tree Lighting, etc.). Any changes will be announced well in advance of the events and shared with riders via the shuttle program website, printed materials, and other announcements.

Alternate Two-Loop Shuttle Route

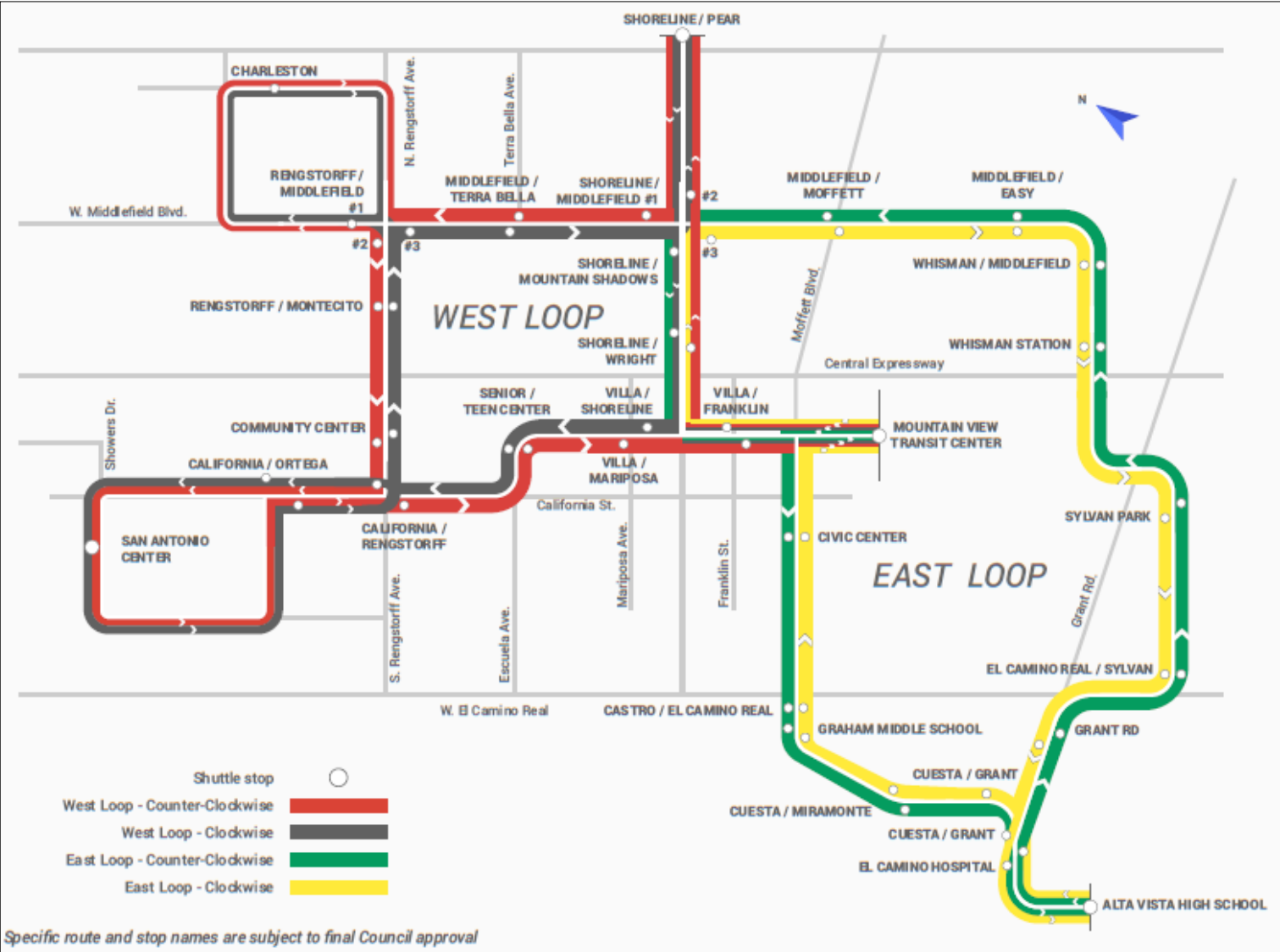
Route Description

Staff evaluated other shuttle route configurations that might better address some of the requested changes/improvements that could not be incorporated into the revised single-loop route described above. This evaluation resulted in the development of an alternate, two-loop shuttle route and service plan (Figure 3).

As its name implies, under this route configuration, shuttle service would be provided along two smaller route loops (an East Loop and a West Loop) as opposed to one larger loop. Two shuttle buses would serve each loop (one running in a clockwise direction, the other in a counterclockwise direction).

Riders would be able to transfer between the two loops at the Downtown Mountain View Transit Center stop and/or any of the stops along Shoreline Boulevard to travel to destinations served by the other loop.

Figure 3 – Alternate Two-Loop Shuttle Route



The two-loop route responds to the following service issues/concerns that the single-loop route as it is currently configured cannot address:

- Service to the Charleston Plaza/Costco Area—The West Loop includes a shuttle stop on Charleston Road near Charleston Plaza and Costco.
- Additional service along Shoreline Boulevard and Villa Street—Service along Shoreline Boulevard and Villa Street has been enhanced with additional stops to provide improved transportation connectivity and service to residential areas near:
 - Shoreline Boulevard and Mountain Shadows Drive.
 - Shoreline Boulevard and Wright Avenue.
 - Shoreline Boulevard and Villa Street.
 - Villa Street and Mariposa Avenue.
 - Villa Street and Franklin Street.
- The stops along Shoreline Boulevard can also serve as transfer points between the two-loop routes, making it easier (and faster) for riders to reach destinations served by the other loop route.

Service Frequency and Travel Times

The estimated frequency of weekday shuttle service on either of the two route loops is approximately 47 minutes, or 9 minutes longer than the proposed single-loop route. Weekend/holiday service frequency will also be approximately every 47 minutes; however, unlike the weekday service when two shuttles will serve each loop providing both clockwise and counterclockwise service, there will only be one shuttle serving each loop—traveling clockwise on the West Loop and counterclockwise on the East Loop.

Sample weekday travel times between selected destinations within and between the East and West Loops are provided below.

East Loop – Sample Estimated Weekday Travel Times

Start	End	Shortest Weekday Travel Time (minutes)	Direction
Sylvan Park	City Hall	24	CW
Middlefield/Easy	Downtown Transit Center	14	CCW
El Camino Hospital	Cuesta/Miramonte	3	CW
Whisman/Middlefield	El Camino Real/Sylvan	6	CW

West Loop – Sample Estimated Weekday Travel Times

Start	End	Shortest Weekday Travel Time (minutes)	Direction
San Antonio Center	Downtown Transit Center	13	CCW
Rengstorff/Montecito	Senior Center	16	CCW
Senior Center	Shoreline/Pear	19	CCW

Trips Requiring Transfer Between Loops – Sample Estimated Weekday Travel Times

Start	End	Shortest Travel Time (minutes)	Travel Route
Rengstorff/Montecito	El Camino Hospital	40	West Loop CW→ East Loop CCW
Senior Center	City Hall	45	West Loop CW→ East Loop CCW
Alta Vista High School	Shoreline/Pear	54-65	East Loop CW→ West Loop CCW
Grant Road	Senior Center	33-34	East Loop CW→ West Loop CW
Alta Vista High School	Charleston Plaza	43-52	East Loop CW→ West Loop CW

Some estimated travel times are presented as a range because actual travel times will vary depending on a rider's wait time to transfer between loops. Riders may be able to reduce their transfer wait times between loops by studying shuttle schedules to determine if it is more advantageous for them to transfer at the Downtown Mountain View Transit Center or one of the proposed shuttle stops along Shoreline Boulevard as well as which shuttle (clockwise or counterclockwise) they should take. Optimizing travel routes and times on the two-loop system will be more complex than on the single-loop route and will require riders to more carefully refer to route schedules and plan their trips.

Although the two-loop route configuration provides additional shuttle service and stop location coverage throughout the City, **staff is recommending implementing the single-loop route** for the initial pilot program based on the following considerations:

- The proposed single-route system serves most of the desired community shuttle destinations identified by residents within a 38-minute service frequency.
- The proposed single-loop route is relatively simple system to install, operate, and understand from the user's perspective—all important considerations for a pilot program. As the system becomes more established, strategic improvements and changes can be implemented based on rider feedback.
- Travel times between distant stops along the two-loop route are not significantly improved, and in some cases are extended (because of transfer time delays), when compared to travel times on the single-loop route.
- The two-loop route is more complex and some riders may have more difficulty in determining how to optimize their travel route and minimize their travel time.

Ongoing Input and Future Route Modifications

Once the initial shuttle pilot program is implemented and becomes stable, and based on rider input as well as input from relevant City advisory bodies and program operators, modifications to the route and stops to improve the shuttle program and better meet the needs of the community can be considered and implemented.

Staff recommends testing the system for at least three to six months before making modifications to the shuttle route or stop locations to allow riders to become familiar with the service and determine how it can best serve their transportation needs.

Community Shuttle Branding/Marketing Materials

Community shuttle buses, stop signs, and informational materials will feature graphics clearly distinguishing the community shuttle pilot program from VTA and other transportation services operating in the City (Attachment 4). The back window of the shuttle buses will also be used to promote community events.

Information regarding shuttle routes, schedules, and operations will be available through:

- A community shuttle website (URL to be determined).
- Printed materials that will be available on shuttles, at City facilities, and other locations throughout the community.

Additionally, the City and Google are exploring the development and implementation of a mobile device software application (i.e., an “app”) that will allow shuttle riders to track the locations and arrival times of shuttle vehicles on a real-time basis. The potential launch date for this service has not been determined.

Shuttle Service Agreement

The key elements of the proposed agreement include:

- Term—Initial term is 24 months, with 120-day written notice from either the City or Google required to terminate the agreement. After that, the agreement will renew automatically for an additional year on the anniversary of the effective date of the agreement unless either the City or Google provides 90-day written notice to terminate.
- Operating Hours, Service Frequency, and Route—As described above for the proposed single-loop route.
- Implementation, Operation, and Funding—Google and/or its contractor will be responsible for implementing, operating, and funding all aspects of the two-year pilot program. Minimal City staff time and other implementation-related expenses will be incurred to coordinate the launch of the program and provide ongoing oversight of shuttle operations.

- Shuttle Fleet—Google will provide a sufficient number of vehicles to maintain a fleet of four (4) vehicles operating along the route on weekdays and two (2) vehicles on weekends and holidays.
- Shuttle Vehicles—Shuttle vehicles will be equipped with seating for 16 passengers, a wheelchair lift, space for two wheelchairs, WiFi connectivity, and bicycle racks on the outside.
- Monthly Reports—Google and/or its contractor will provide the City monthly reports detailing shuttle service operations, including, but not limited to, ridership volumes, boardings and disembarkings by stop location, shuttle on-time performance, complaints by riders, accident/claim activity, required schedule/route modifications (because of events, street closures, etc.), requests for route/stop modifications, summary of website activity, operational issues requiring further discussion, etc.
- Service/Stop Modifications—Mutual agreement by the City and Google will be required to modify the shuttle service and/or stops.
- Insurance/Indemnification—The City will be named as an additional insured and Google will defend, indemnify, and hold the City, its officers, employees, and agents harmless from any liability for damage or claims that may arise from Google or its contractors providing shuttle services.
- Disposition of Assets—If shuttle service ceases, Google will retain ownership of any/all shuttle vehicles. Ownership of other assets (i.e., signs and poles, website URL, website content, ridership and other data, etc.) will remain with the City.

Next Steps

Based on Council's direction, City staff will continue working with Google staff to finalize the agreement for shuttle services so that shuttle operations can begin in early January.

As stated earlier, it is expected that the City will fine-tune the shuttle route and stop locations based on rider feedback and collect ridership data to assess the demand for shuttle services throughout the two-year term of the pilot program.

At this time, staff does not anticipate making changes to the proposed shuttle route, stops, or service for at least three months after the pilot program begins to allow riders

to become familiar with the shuttle service and determine how it best serves their transportation needs.

Staff will also meet with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (B/PAC), Senior Advisory Committee (SAC), and Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) after the shuttle program has been running for a few months to seek input regarding how well the shuttle pilot program is serving the transportation needs of their constituents and if there are suggested modifications to the service.

Consideration of Environmental Factors

Based on the operational parameters of the proposed community shuttle pilot program described above, staff has determined that the proposed community shuttle pilot program is exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). The activity is covered by the general rule which exempts activities that can be seen with certainty to have no possibility for causing a significant effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

Google is fully funding the operations of the two-year community shuttle pilot program.

Minimal City staff time and other implementation-related expenses will be incurred to coordinate the launch of the program and provide ongoing oversight of shuttle operations.

CONCLUSION

The proposed community shuttle pilot program will provide new transportation options for Mountain View residents whose mobility needs are not currently being met by existing transportation services available in Mountain View, but cannot satisfy the divergent needs/service preferences (e.g., operating hours, service frequency, stop locations, routes, etc.) of all residents.

Once the initial shuttle pilot program is implemented and has had the opportunity to stabilize (likely three to six months), modifications to the service can be considered and implemented so that the service best meets the mobility needs of the community.

Staff requests City Council authorization to enter into an agreement with Google to provide community shuttle pilot program services.

Based on Council's direction, staff will pursue the implementation of a single- or two-loop shuttle route system in January, 2015.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to develop other shuttle route alternatives and present them to Council for review and approval before implementing a pilot community shuttle service program.
2. Do not authorize staff to enter into an agreement with Google to provide community shuttle program services as part of a two-year pilot program.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

PUBLIC NOTICING

August 12 Community Meeting

In advance of the August 12 community meeting, the following community outreach/public noticing efforts were undertaken:

- Announcement of the proposed community shuttle pilot program through a July 10, 2014 media release.
- The addition of a Community Shuttle page to the City's website providing information regarding the August 12 meeting, the proposed shuttle route, the proposed shuttle service, and a form to leave comments.
- Outreach to the City's B/PAC, SAC, YAC, and neighborhood associations.
- Establishment of a telephone hotline number to take public comments and input.
- More than 3,850 notices were mailed to residents and businesses located within 300' of each proposed shuttle stop location informing them of the proposed shuttle program.

October 21 Council Meeting

In advance of the October 21 City Council meeting, the following additional community outreach/public noticing efforts were undertaken:

- Notices regarding the October 21 meeting were posted on social media and announced through other City contact lists.
- The Community Shuttle page on the City's website was updated to provide new information regarding the proposed shuttle program and the Council's discussion of the topic at its October 21 meeting.
- More than 5,200 notices were mailed to residents and businesses located within 300' of each proposed shuttle stop location informing them of the proposed shuttle program.

Prepared by:

Linda Forsberg
Transportation and Business Manager

Approved by:

Michael A. Fuller
Public Works Director

Daniel H. Rich
City Manager

LF/7/CAM
901-10-21-14CR-E

- Attachments:
1. Google – City and Community Involvement
 2. Summary of Comments Received at the August 12, 2014 Community Meeting
 3. Summary of Comments Received Through the Community Shuttle Page on the City's Website (Through October 7, 2104)
 4. Community Shuttle Proposed Branding/Marketing Graphics