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Free Bus Pass Program for Community College Students

CalACT | Jonathan Steketee, Manager, Operations Planning

Agenda

1. Overview
2. Project Goals
3. College Bus Routes
4. Challenges
5. Successes

Overview

- SamTrans provided 10,000 free unlimited bus-passes for community college students for two years (2024-2026) on a first-come, first-served basis
- Funded by C/CAG's Lifeline Transportation Grant
  - $584k from grant (80%)
  - $146k from local match (20% - SamTrans/SMCCCD)

Partnership between:

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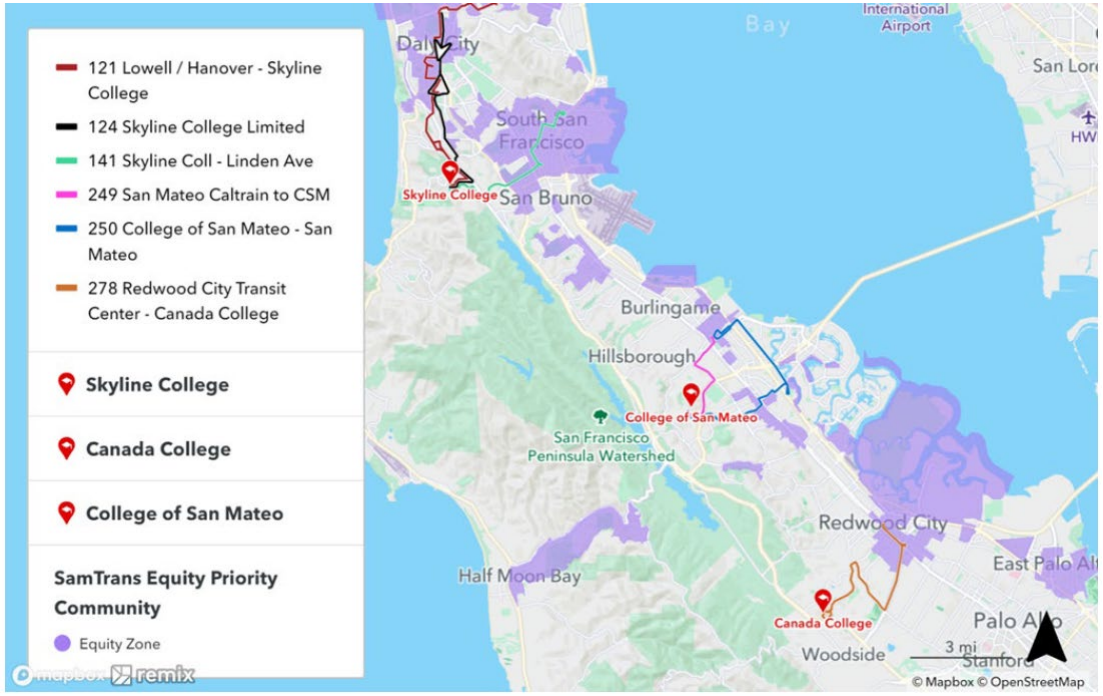
C/CAG
City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County

SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Cañada College • College of San Mateo • Skyline College

College Bus Routes



- SamTrans offers an extensive network of bus routes that serve the community college campuses and plans to launch additional limited stop routes to the colleges
- Part of the full completion of the Reimagine SamTrans network

Project Goals

- Lower barrier to students' access to education, employment, healthcare, leisure destinations
- Address affordability for Community Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) and low-income populations

Challenges

- Administrative hurdles
  - Program officially launched one quarter after the school year, lost opportunity to capture students early
- Hybrid attendance
  - 40% of classes are online and 60% are hybrid
  - Students are less likely to come to campus
- Built environment
  - Free parking disincentivizes transit use
- Competing commuter benefit programs
  - Students were also eligible for pre-loaded FasTrak or Clipper cards

Successes

- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and community college staff
- Students who use the passes are more likely to be transit-dependent or cannot afford a personal vehicle
- Increase in bus ridership among college students

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Thank You

Please email steketeej@samtrans.com with any questions.