



Fast Facts: SamTrans US-101 Express Bus Feasibility Study

What is an express bus?

An express bus is a transit service that is designed to travel faster than traditional “local” services to popular commuter destinations. They typically offer faster travel times by traveling on freeways and making fewer stops. The most likely passengers of express buses are weekday commuters or other passengers traveling somewhat long distances between cities. The express bus services SamTrans is exploring would be open to all passengers.

What is this study?

SamTrans undertook this study in order to evaluate the possibility of new express bus service through San Mateo County, to San Francisco and Santa Clara counties, with some routes potentially running in a managed lane on US-101. This study included research and analysis of the potential bus service, as well as a public engagement process to hear from potential riders, advocacy organizations, and other local stakeholders. The study team compiled its research, analysis, and findings from community input into a final report in Fall 2018.



Goal 1 Provide **Mobility Options** for **Regional Trips**



Goal 2 Increase **Transit Market Share** in Corridor



Goal 3 Develop a **Cost-Effective Service**



Goal 4 Improve **Transportation Equity**



Goal 5 Enhance **Access to Jobs** and Population Centers



Goal 6 Support Sustainable **Land Use** and **Transportation Policies**

Why did we undertake this study?

US-101 is one of the most congested freeways in the Bay Area, and express buses can play a role in providing an easy alternative to driving alone and strengthening connectivity to jobs and housing hubs. Express buses would be just one part of the solution to easing commutes on US-101. Together with other transportation improvements along the corridor, express bus service has the potential to help improve travel conditions and options.

Is this the same as the San Mateo US-101 Managed Lanes Project?

No. While the projects are related, the US-101 Express Bus Feasibility Study complements but is separate from the San Mateo US-101 Managed Lanes Project. The San Mateo US-101 Managed Lanes Project is a feasibility study for implementing a continuous managed traffic lane along the US-101 corridor, whereas the US-101 Express Bus Feasibility Study examined the financial and operational feasibility of long-distance express buses operating on US-101, serving San Mateo County and adjacent counties. Ultimately, new express bus services along US-101 might be one of several transportation options that helps to maximize the benefit of managed lanes on US-101.

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What is a Managed Lane, also known as an Express Lane?

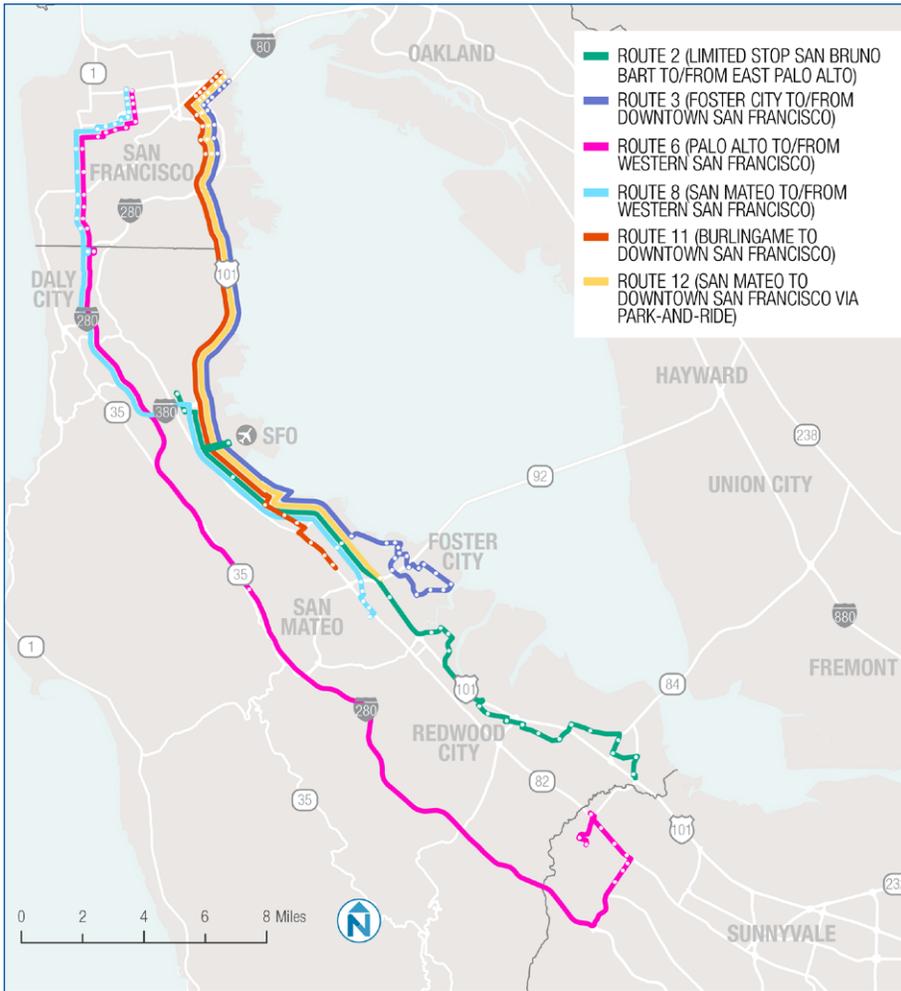
- » Carpools, buses, motorcycles and eligible clean air vehicles free
- » Other drivers can choose to pay
- » Electronic toll collection using transponders in vehicle
- » Dynamic tolls (congestion pricing) keep lane free flowing



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What did the Study find and what happens next?

SamTrans launched this study in April 2017 and completed a draft report in October 2018. Over the course of the study, the team completed a detailed market analysis and identified an initial set of 15 potential express bus routes throughout the three-county study area. Over two rounds of evaluation, the initial routes were screened against a set of goals and performance metrics such as anticipated ridership, ability to serve new transit markets, and cost per passenger.

Of the 15 initial route concepts, the study is recommending a phased implementation of six new express routes (see sidebar on this page for more on the phased strategy). SamTrans staff will soon begin preparing for the launch of a pilot re-introduction of express routes in Phase 1, including identifying funding needed for this phase and future phases and conducting more outreach and marketing to communities near the proposed routes. The new express service will be funded in part through SB1 funds.

This project has been made possible by a grant from the California Department of Transportation and a grant from the Regional Planning grantmaking strategy of Silicon Valley Community Foundation.



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Phased Implementation Strategy

The study recommends implementation of express bus service in three phases. The recommended phasing plan introduces and expands express bus service as resources and demand allow.

1 Phase 1 (Pilot Project)

There is an opportunity to introduce two recommended express bus routes in the immediate future, tentatively Summer 2019. Routes 3 and 6 would be implemented in this phase. This initial service could be rolled out with minimal infrastructure improvements and using existing SamTrans buses retrofitted to provide amenities. Once zero emission electric buses are procured and charging infrastructure is installed, the service could be transitioned to electric buses.

2 Phase 2 (with Managed Lanes Launch)

Some of the recommended routes would benefit from the availability of managed lanes to offer competitive alternatives to private automobiles or existing transit services in the study area. Therefore, these routes – Routes 2 and 12 – would be implemented in coordination with the delivery of managed lanes on US-101 anticipated by 2022. The timeline of managed lanes provides an opportunity to procure zero emission vehicles and associated infrastructure and to improve the US-101/CA-92 park-and-ride lot.

3 Phase 3 (Future Growth)

In addition to the routes included in earlier phases of implementation, some other routes serving focused markets may benefit from mature express bus services in the study area and from strategic partnerships. Routes 8 and 11 could be implemented after the first two phases have been implemented or when such partnerships are realized.