

SAMTRANS
CORRESPONDENCE
as of 9-7-2022

SamTrans Board of Directors
1250 San Carlos Ave.
P.O. Box 3006
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

Dear Chair Ratto and SamTrans Board of Directors,

We are current and future parents of Menlo-Atherton High School students, most of whom live in Ladera (an independent, unincorporated community, adjacent to Portola Valley and Menlo Park, comprised of approximately 535 homes), and have an urgent issue that we are petitioning you to help find a solution. Our transportation to and from school along SamTrans Route 286 was terminated without warning, and without any communication to the school or the community. The termination of bus route 286 is causing significant hardship for the students and the families who rely on this service to get to and from school, and impacts the rest of the community members who chose to live in a neighborhood that feeds into Menlo-Atherton High School.

On August 12, 2022, two working days before the first day of school, we received a "Back to School" email from M-A with the following notification on page 3:

Please note that effective 8/7/22 SamTrans will discontinue all service along the Alpine Road corridor because of low ridership, and based on a recommendation from a multi-year long transit planning study called Reimagine SamTrans. We were notified of this sudden change only recently, and without warning; we regret the timing and inconvenience and will seek ways to serve affected families. We will communicate updates as they come.

Since then, families whose students attend M-A have had to scramble to piece together unsustainable transportation solutions for their children. Thus far, appeals to the school and the school district to help resolve the situation have resulted in families being told that SamTrans is the only solution.

Currently, we have between 14 and 16 students who have no transportation to our zoned public high school, Menlo-Atherton High School each day. We also have many prospective students currently in middle school, whose parents are equally concerned. We see two options for providing transportation to and from school for these students. The first is for SamTrans to restore the historical Route 286 which runs between M-A and Ladera/ Portola Valley. A second option, at least for the afternoon, is to coordinate the current SamTrans bus 87 from Woodside High School that still runs to Portola Valley (despite it not being our zoned school) so that our students could take Bus 86 to Sharon

Heights from M-A and then transfer to Bus 87 to bring them home to Ladera. We would then still need a solution for the morning.

We are urging Sam Trans to provide a quick solution to allow our children to travel safely to and from school, either by reinstating Route 286 or by instituting a separate route that connects to Route 86 or 87. We plan to be at the board meeting on September 7th, and request that this issue be brought before the board at that time.

Signed,

Signed by current MA parents as well as prospective MA parents

Avni Shah
Rajiv Mahadevan
Christie Trott
Brad Adelberg
Josh Richman
Ayça Alemdaroglu
Jan Skotheim
Jordana Weiss
Jamie Rosen
Michael Rosen
Andy Pflaum
Ben Weiss
Deepa Kalani
Vivasvat Keswani
Emi Sato
Tohru Sato
Diane Schrader
Mehmet Göker
Ozge Göker
Sharon Chen
Anh Nguyen
Sinda Chun
Dave Chun
Bree Connally
Jonathan Shipman
Rosemary Hintz
Greg Hintz

Kristy Cox
Eric Cox
Amber Maletis
Peter Maletis
Sam Balakrishnan
Karthik Balakrishnan
Ann Cullen
Patrick Cullen
Sandy Schroedel
Jason Schroedel
Carrie Friedberg
Jason Friedberg
Laura Hamilton
Paul Conley
Vera Conley
Anna Ralston
John Ralston
Pauline Becker
Kate Bartow
Nicole Bartow
Marcia Hakanson
Kent Hakanson
Leslie Anglada
Rob Matthews
Gretchen Matthews
Sarah Arnold
Peter Young
Vinita Narishima
Ajay Narishima
Meg Thomas
Calin Thomas
Dana Shank
Jon Shank
Julie Carr
Mike Carr
Christine Martens
Linda Fornaciari
Jennifer Hipple
James Mack
Lena Perkins

Dana Shank
Jon Shank
Diane Bradley
David Bradley
Anna Buxbaum
Darin Buxbaum
Greg Hintz
Rosemary Hintz

Cc:
Assemblyman Marc Berman
Senator Josh Becker
County Supervisor Don Horsley

California State Senate

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SENATOR
JOSH BECKER

THIRTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE

September 6, 2022

Mr. Peter Ratto
Chair, SamTrans Board of Directors
1250 San Carlos Avenue
PO Box 3006
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

Re: Concern over termination of bus service to Ladera school community

Dear Chair Ratto and SamTrans Board of Directors,

Thank you to the board's commitment to provide equitable, sustainable transit service to the students in our community. A group of current and future Menlo-Atherton High School parents in Ladera has contacted me to express their deep concern over the termination of Bus Route 286 that serviced their Portola Valley/Menlo Park neighborhood—an approximate 20 minute one-way trip to the high school. This termination went into effect with very little notice, leaving families scrambling to find transportation for their children just days before the start of the new school year.

I fully support your agency's equity-centered mission and the need to allocate resources where they are most needed. However, I respectfully ask that you reconsider reinstating bus service to this area in my district to provide safe and reliable transportation for our M-A students. The parent group estimates approximately 15 students would currently benefit from the service. Additionally, there is a cohort of middle school students who will likely rely on bus service to M-A next year.

I encourage SamTrans to work with this parent group to achieve a solution that gets their kids to school and back safely using public transportation. As you know, I am working hard in Sacramento to meet the urgent challenges of climate change, adaptation and resiliency through an equitable lens---and offering a robust public transit system to citizens of all ages is crucial to meeting our state's climate goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Becker".

Josh Becker
Senator, 13th District

From: [David Boyce](#)
To: [Nabong, Sarah](#)
Cc: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Subject: Re: Bus driver misbehavior ...
Date: Saturday, September 3, 2022 4:32:49 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from boycedaveboyce@gmail.com.

[Learn why this is important](#)

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... and disrespected!

On Sat, Sep 3, 2022, 16:22 David Boyce <boycedaveboyce@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello, Ms. Nabong. You wrote to me some time back regarding a complaint I had about a conductor on Caltrain.

I have a new complaint, but because the SamTrans online complaint form limits me to 3,000 characters, I suspect my message and its good faith would be truncated and compromised, so I'm writing to you directly.

Recently, it's been my goal to reduce chance encounters of disrespect in public spaces: road rage in all its manifestations, for example. So because I ride a bike and don't drive, I now try to use bike paths rather than bike lanes whenever possible.

And I take my bike on the bus when it makes sense for a longer trip.

On Friday, Sept. 2, at around 6:30 pm, I waited with my bike at the northbound SamTrans bus stop at Cambridge Ave. on El Camino Real.

There's construction going on, so I stood behind orange traffic cones. An ECR bus appeared and I waved to the driver, given the cones and the possibility that this stop is infrequently used. He put on his left turn signal and moved to the left lane and drove on by, his face a study in indifference.

An hour later, at the Ravenswood stop, the driver expressed surprise at my account, thereby answering my unasked question as to whether the Cambridge stop had been discontinued during construction. The driver on my return trip also was taken aback.

I did not get the number of the offending bus, but I can say that the driver was male with black hair and dark skin tone and in his 40s or possibly 30s.

Color me pissed off!

From: [David Boyce](#)
To: [Nabong, Sarah](#)
Cc: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Subject: Bus driver misbehavior ...
Date: Saturday, September 3, 2022 4:22:57 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from boycedaveboyce@gmail.com.

[Learn why this is important](#)

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Color me pissed off!

From: [Nicholas Muys](#)
To: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Subject: Statement from Menlo-Atherton High School regarding the former 286 route to Portola Valley
Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 1:56:14 PM

You don't often get email from nmuys@seq.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear Trustees of the SamTrans Board:

My name is Nicholas Muys, an Administrative Vice Principal at Menlo-Atherton High School. I speak to you on behalf of the M-A's students and their parents, the M-A administration, and the Sequoia Union High School District. Thank you for making time for me today.

Menlo-Atherton High School and the Sequoia Union High School District have long enjoyed an effective partnership with SamTrans. You have been responsive to our changing needs, and have been steadfast in your commitment to serving all of our students, for which we are grateful.

I write to you therefore with particular dismay at the recent decision to eliminate a vital leg of the former 286 bus route serving our students living in the Portola Valley/ Ladera along Alpine Road. Our students who live along that corridor are now essentially cut off from access to public transportation, as the 86 bus route only reaches the Sharon Park area, a ten to fifteen minute drive for many Portola Valley families.

Needless to say, SamTrans's sudden and ill-timed decision has caused considerable disruption to the families currently affected, who now do not have reliable transport to school. Instead, families are struggling to cobble together carpools and other solutions, causing significant stress on students and their parents and posing barriers to educational access. Indeed, the Ladera decision contravenes many of SamTrans's own Eleven Core Principles, as it prevents students from accessing public transportation and contributes to increased traffic and emissions in already congested areas in our community.

I therefore implore you to reinstate the route of the former SamTrans 286, for which there is a demonstrated need: recent surveys of our community reveal upwards of thirteen current families who need the route to reliably get to and from M-A from Ladera. All of those families indicated their strong intent to use the route should it become available.

If restoring the former route is not currently possible within SamTrans's working framework, I ask that you consider a solution that builds on existing resources: modifying the SamTrans

87 route to include a link to the 86, which shares a stop with the 87 at Alameda de las Pulgas and Avy Rd. Such a link would require only some slight alterations of the routes' timing to correspond with M-A's bell schedule.

In closing, SUHSD schools and SamTrans share a commitment to public service, and our partnership has long reflected that common bond; I look forward to working with SamTrans to resolve this matter in the same collaborative spirit that has so long characterized our work together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

--

Nicholas Muys
Administrative Vice Principal
Menlo-Atherton High School
555 Middlefield Road
Atherton, CA 94027
650-322-5311 x50123