

Improving Transit Access, Opportunity + Equity for Riders in Oakland

Oakland, CA, MetWest High School

11th Grade Advisory



ISSUE

Young people offer refreshing and powerful insight to transportation planning. Many students are not choice riders and rely daily on public transportation to go to and from school, home, internships, and other extracurricular activities. Students from MetWest High School in Oakland, CA recently worked with AC Transit, the public transit agency serving the San Francisco Bay Area's Alameda and Contra Costa counties on how to improve their service. AC Transit is undergoing a period of planning changes through its Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA). Throughout the COA, AC Transit is working on a plan to review AC Transit service, infrastructure, and policies to create a new and long-term vision for investment to improve access and opportunity for riders in the Bay Area. Receiving feedback is an integral part of the COA process. This fall, Advisory students from MetWest's junior class researched solutions to improve bus service for their client, AC Transit transportation planner, Stephen Newhouse. During the Fall 2014 semester, students conducted research, site visits, and interviews to collect community input on how to improve service without increasing costs.

"The Center for Cities + Schools' Y-PLAN program is a great example of how government agencies like AC Transit can encourage civic participation among young people and their families. The Y-PLAN exposes young people and adults to a variety of real world problems, and perspectives."

-David Armijo, General Manager, AC Transit

"We are the voice of the people."
- Y-PLAN Student, MetWest High School

QUESTION

How can AC Transit equitably allocate a fixed set of resources to improve access and opportunity in Oakland?

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: Y-PLAN TEAM

Y-PLAN Instructors: Mike Cellemme, Alex Mejia + Nick Palmquist
Students: 11th Grade Literature + History
Clients: Stephen Newhouse, AC Transit



YOUTH DRIVEN DATA AND INSIGHTS

- Students collected over 200 surveys, many along their own bus lines. Riders were most concerned about frequency of the buses, and safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

#1 Remove certain bus stops to increase frequency

- Students found that many bus stops were too close together. By removing some unnecessary stops, the frequency of service could increase and as a result attract more users.

#2 Split bus routes to increase frequency

- Splitting routes would create shorter times since individual buses would have shorter distances to travel and less room for error in terms of staying on schedule.

#3 Consolidate certain routes to increase frequency

- Some lines, like Line 14 and Line 62 had similar routes. Combine these two routes to conserve resources.

#4 Add more features like shelters, benches and next-time bus timers

- Unpredictable bus schedules and a lack of amenities deters many potential riders from using AC Transit's service. By implementing next-time timers, riders would have better information to know when the bus is coming. Likewise, by increasing the amount of benches and shelters, riders would be more encouraged to wait for the bus.

#5 Improve safety by installing cameras

- When asked, some riders responded that safety was a large reason for not riding the bus. Install cameras at certain stops so potential riders would feel safe and be encouraged to ride the bus.

"The Y-PLAN structure is perfect for us. Every student at the final presentation actually got to experience success just by being there. And that helps build their self-confidence and feelings of potential that will bear fruit later in their lives."

*- Charlie Plant, Principal,
MetWest High School*

NEXT STEPS

Based on feedback from the presentations, transportation planners will use this information as part of their written report during the first phase of the COA. AC Transit will conduct a second round of community engagement and meetings, where students will be able to share their input on what should be changed about certain routes.



For more information on Y-PLAN, contact Jessie Stewart, Y-PLAN National Director: jessie.stewart@berkeley.edu