

Sept. 14, 2016

Nuria Fernandez
General Manager
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95134-1906

RE: Comments on VTA's Next Network Concepts

Dear Ms. Fernandez,

Palo Alto Council of PTAs has recently learned that the Next Network regional transit plan concepts would eliminate the VTA88 which serves Gunn High School in Palo Alto. The Council of PTAs is writing in support of Gunn High School PTSA's request to VTA to *work cooperatively with Gunn High School PTSA representatives and the City of Palo Alto as VTA has done in the past to understand local needs and problems the Next Network concepts might present, including duplication of private operator bus service.* We appreciate and value the existing VTA 88 bus service. Please maintain VTA88bus routes as they run today. If possible, improve headways and add at least one end-of-day run.

Each year in Palo Alto, district-wide PTAs mobilize hundreds of volunteers to educate and encourage district families to choose alternative commutes. In fact, Palo Alto's Safe Routes to School program is one of the most successful in the nation, shifting a majority of Palo Alto Unified School District students to alternative school commute modes, including bus transit, encouraging a new generation of transit users.

About 100 Gunn High School students per day rely on the VTA88. The current VTA schedule does not serve students who attend after school curriculars as well as it might. Improved headways and one extra run in the evening might make the VTA88 more attractive to students—providing flexibility to ride the bus home after dark. We believe this change could present an opportunity to improve ridership—one of the Next Network stated goals.

PTA volunteers worked in cooperation with VTA and City of Palo Alto staff to save the 88 line in 2009. We value this service, and we ask VTA to work with us again.

VTA enjoys strong sales tax revenues generated in Palo Alto. Palo Alto already has relieved VTA of coverage responsibility by providing the City of Palo Alto Shuttle to complement VTA routes without impacting VTA ridership. Loss of the VTA88 would pose a significant problem for south Palo Alto and the Gunn students who rely on this bus every day.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

*Audrey Nold, President 2016-17
Palo Alto Council of PTAs
<http://ptac.paloaltopta.org>*