



Palo Alto Link One-Year Service Evaluation & Report

April 1, 2024

www.cityofpaloalto.org/PaloAltoLink

STAFF PRESENTING



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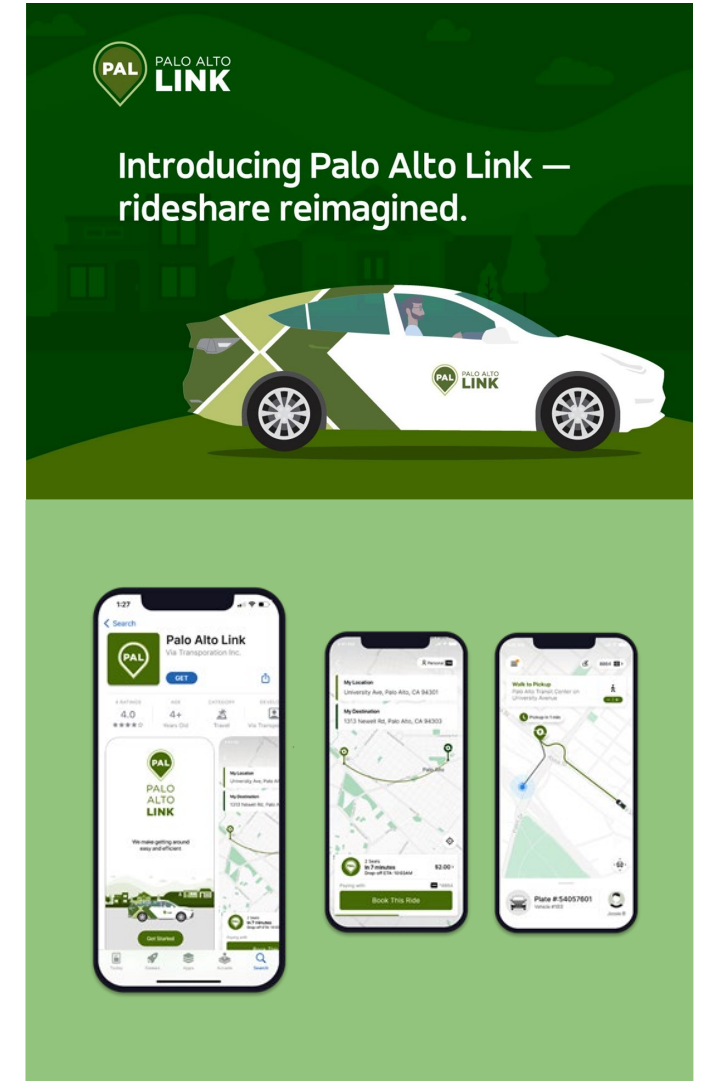
TODAY'S PRESENTATION

1. Background and Review Palo Alto Link Performance
2. Highlight Palo Alto Link Rider Demographics & Insights
3. Funding Review



Background

- Palo Alto Free Shuttle saw ridership decline over four consecutive years.
- In 2017, the City Council examined transit strategies and directed development of a flexible service model.
- The Crosstown Shuttle was terminated in April 2020 with a monthly average of 3,938 riders in its final fiscal year.
- Palo Alto was granted \$2 million by VTA's Measure B funds for the new Palo Alto Link service.



On-Demand Transit

Hours

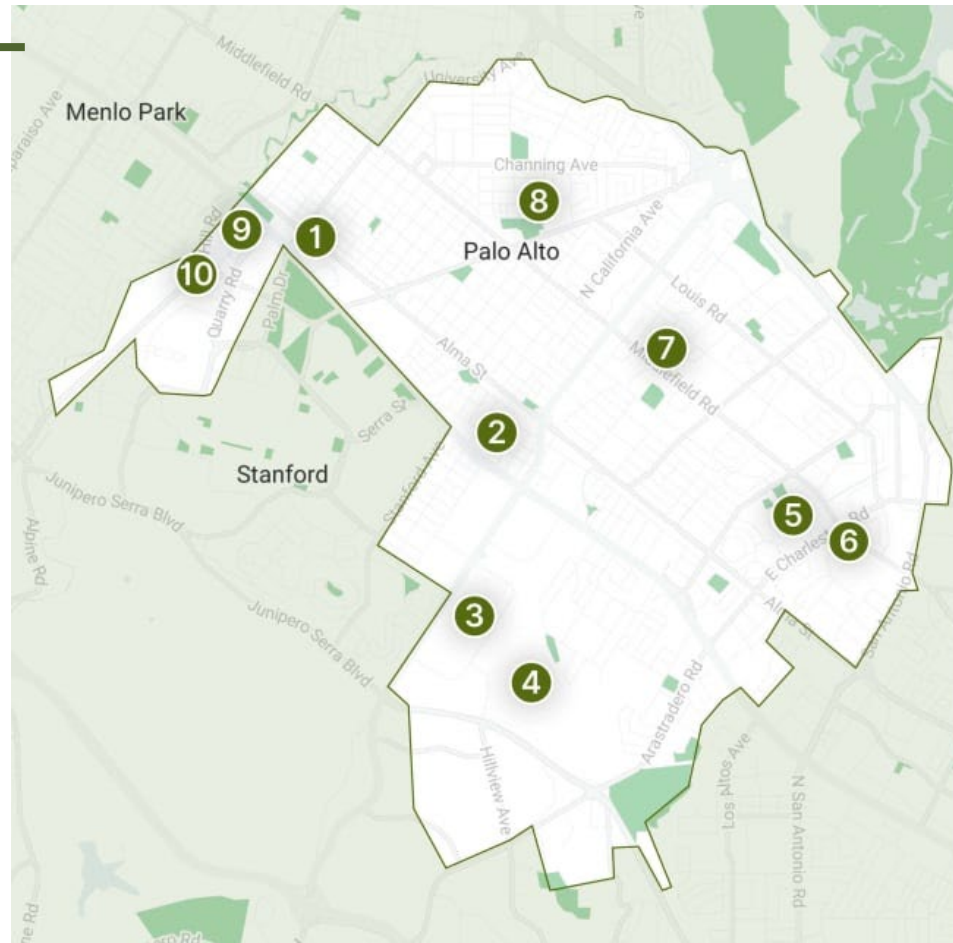
- Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm

Fleet

- 9-vehicles: 6 Tesla Y model Evs & 3 Hybrid Toyota Siennas (wheelchair accessible vans)
- All vehicles equipped with Bicycle Racks

Fare

- \$3.50 – Regular adult
- \$1.00 – Senior (65+)/disabled/low-income/youth (5-17)



Popular destinations:

- 1 Palo Alto CalTrain & Downtown
- 2 California Avenue [CalTrain, Shopping, & Dining]
- 3 Stanford Research Park
- 4 Palo Alto VA Medical Center
- 5 Mitchell Park
- 6 Cubberley Community Center & Charleston Shopping Center
- 7 Midtown & Shopping
- 8 Community Center
- 9 Stanford Shopping Center
- 10 Stanford Hospital

PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

Palo Alto Link has unlocked an accessible, efficient, and sustainable way to get around Palo Alto.



50,220+
completed
rides



840+
unique riders
per month



13.8 min
average wait
time



4.8/5
average ride
rating

- **Convenient shared-ride alternative to private vehicles**, with the ability to book on-demand trips through an intuitive mobile app
- **Seamless connections to key points of interest**, including major employers, transit hubs, schools, and local shops
- **Sustainable and accessible service**, with a custom-branded fleet of hybrid and wheelchair accessible vehicles (book by phone or app)

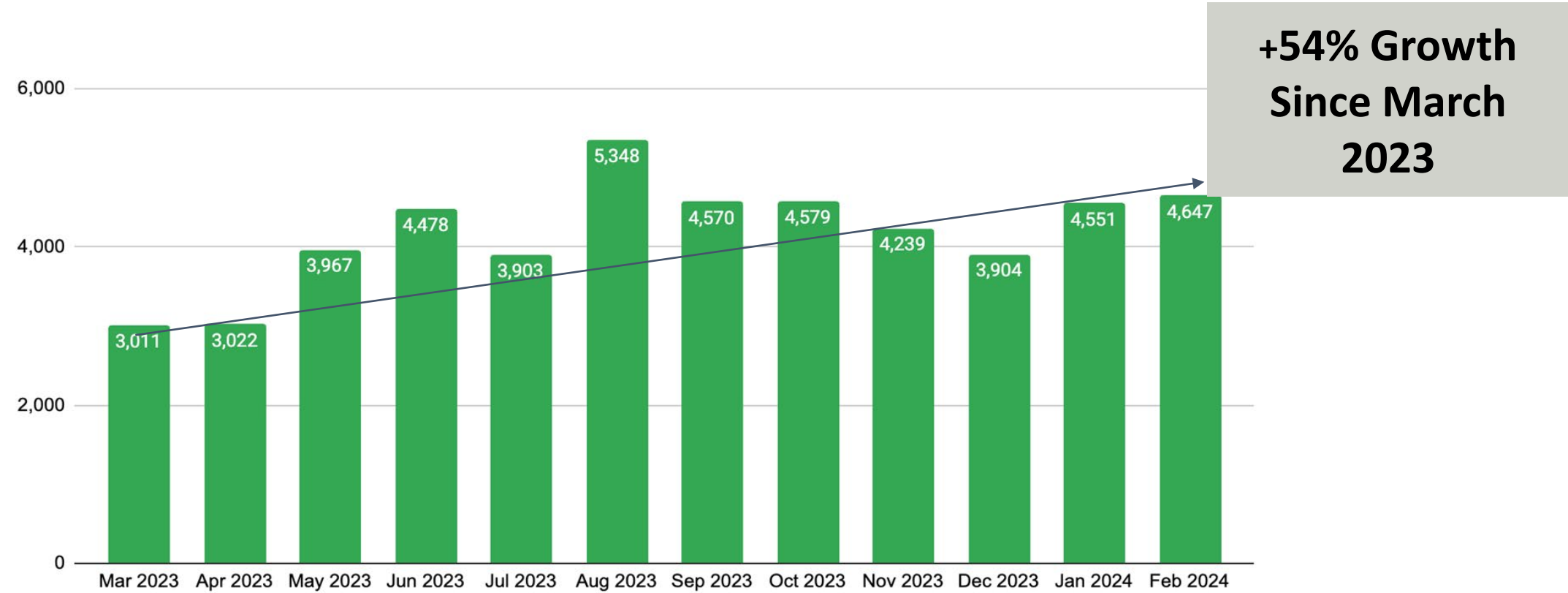
**Data from March 7, 2023 - February 29, 2024*



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RIDERSHIP

Palo Alto Link ridership has grown steadily since launch in March 2023.

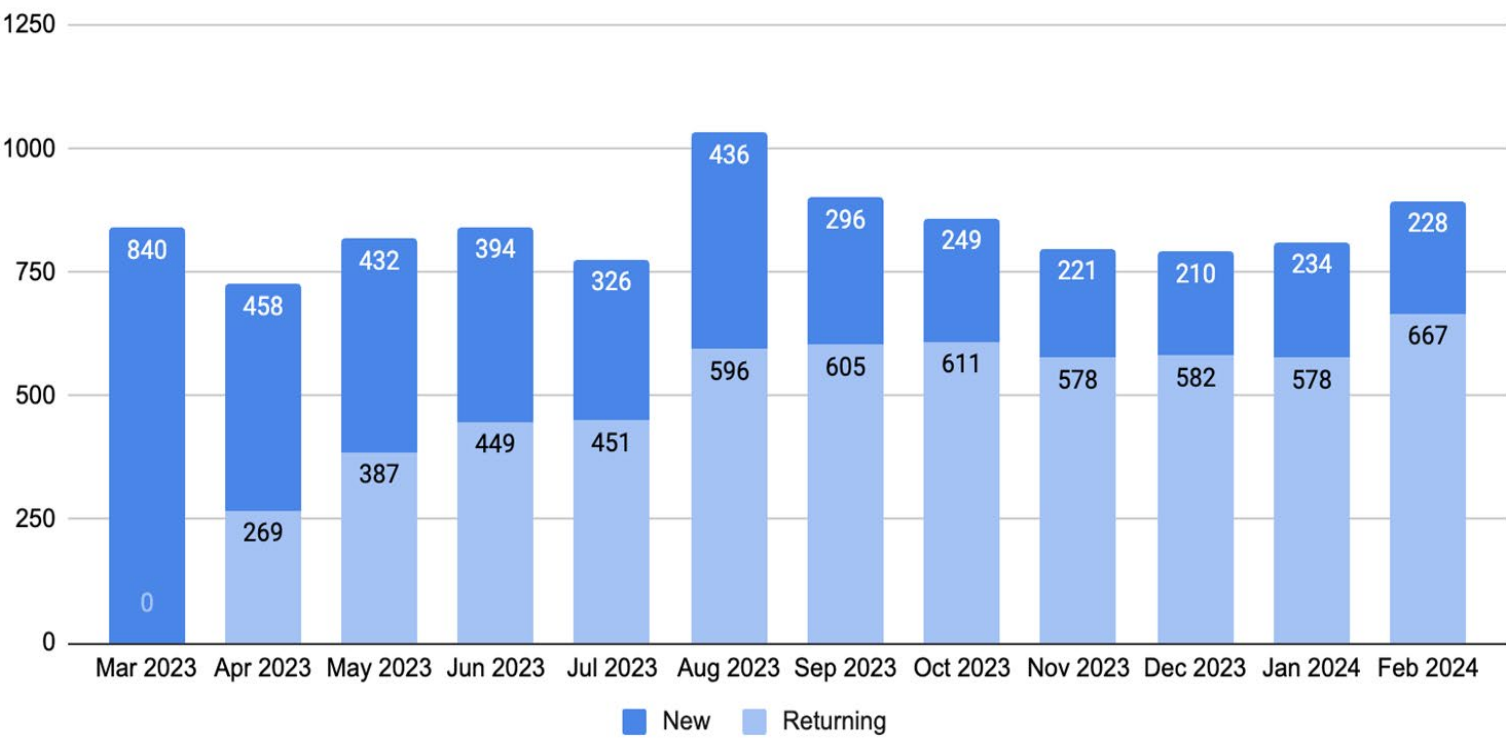


RIDERSHIP

Palo Alto Link continues to attract new riders while maintaining an engaged base of repeat riders.

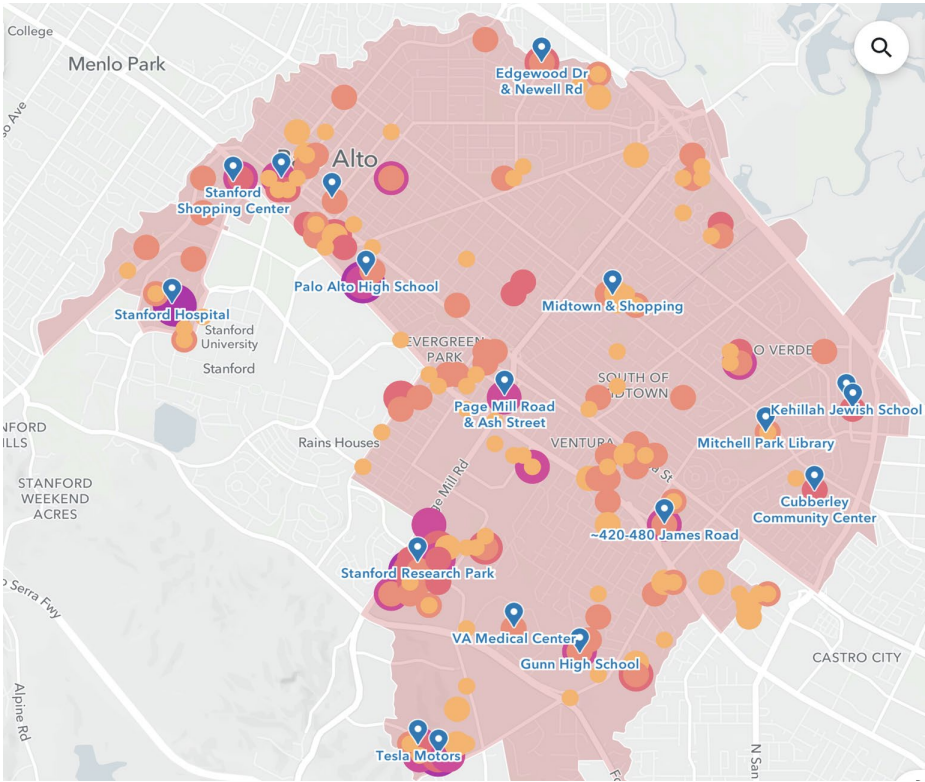
73%+ of trips were taken by returning riders.

Active Riders Split By New vs. Returning



RIDERSHIP

Riders use Palo Alto Link to reach key community resources, including schools, employers, transit hubs, and local shops.



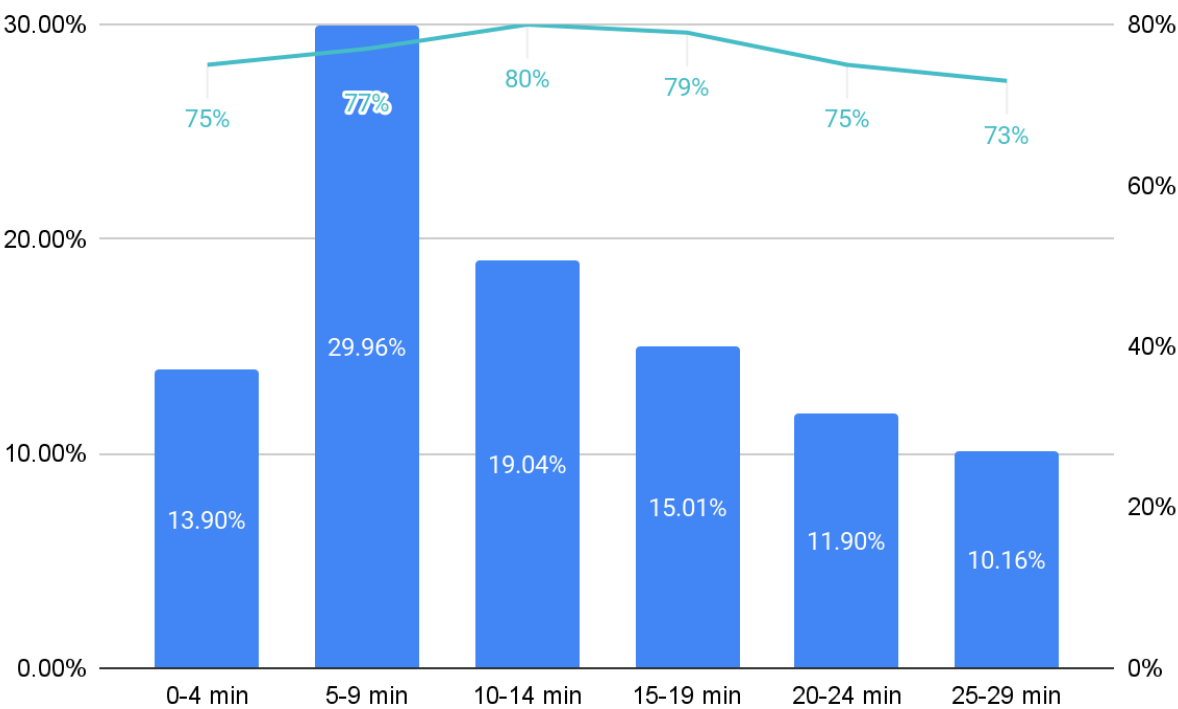
Top Pickup/Dropoff Locations	% of Total Trips (Sep-Jan Avg.)
Stanford Research Park	32%
Palo Alto High School	7%
Stanford Mall	4%
Gunn High School	3%
Palo Alto Caltrain Station	3%
Stanford Hospital	2%

WAIT TIMES

While Palo Alto Link riders typically accept wait times up to 30 minutes, over 80% of requests receive a wait time below 20 minutes.

78% of requests receive an est. wait time under 20 minutes

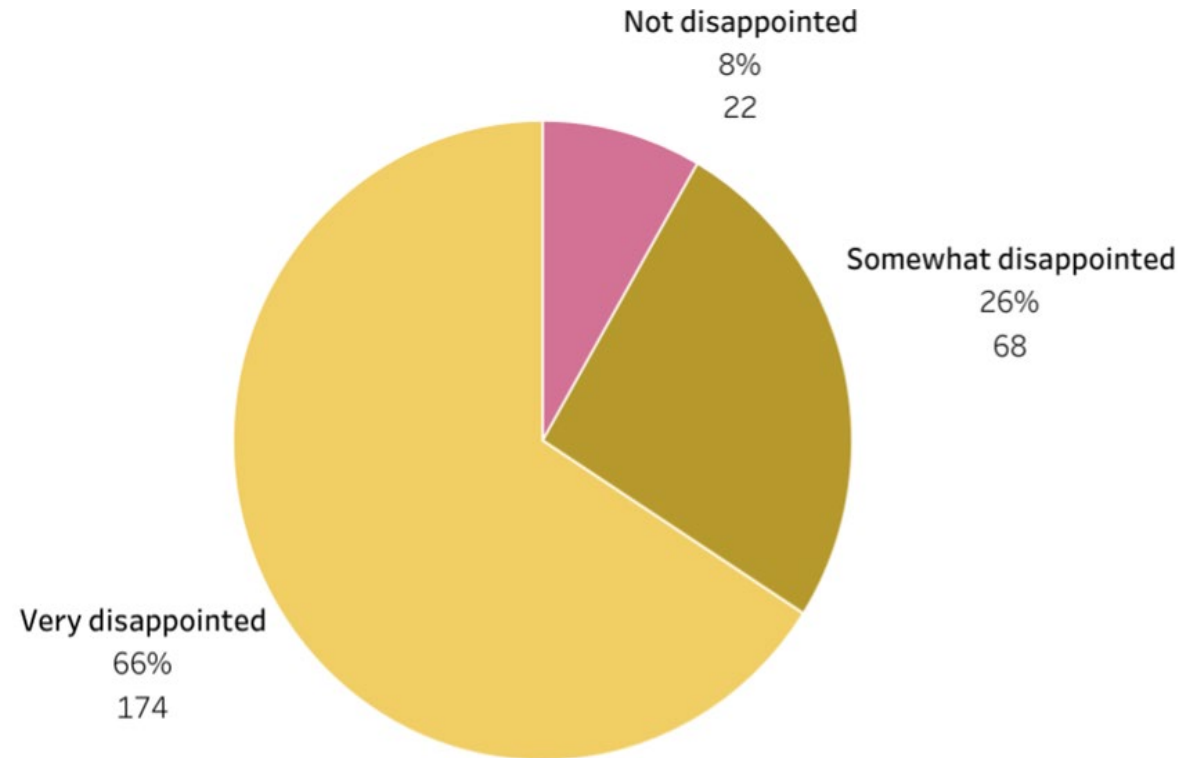
Trip Acceptance Rate & Demand Distribution
Broken Down By Proposed Wait Time



RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS & INSIGHTS

Riders have come to love and rely on Palo Alto Link for essential mobility.

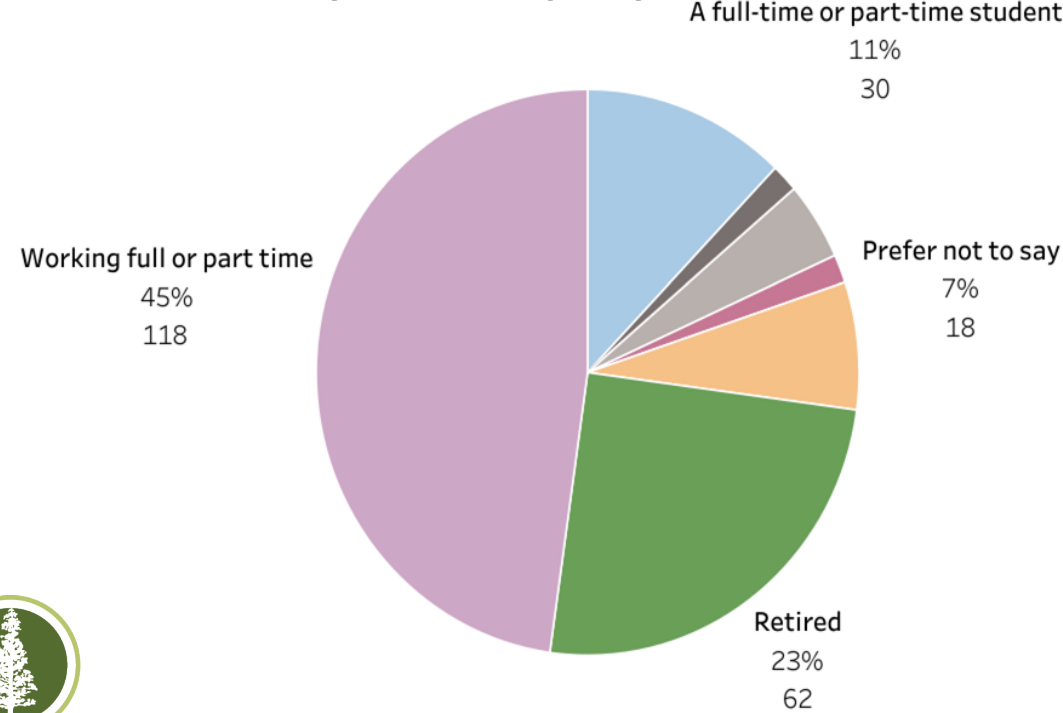
**Survey Question:
"How disappointed
would you be if you
could no longer use
Palo Alto Link?"**



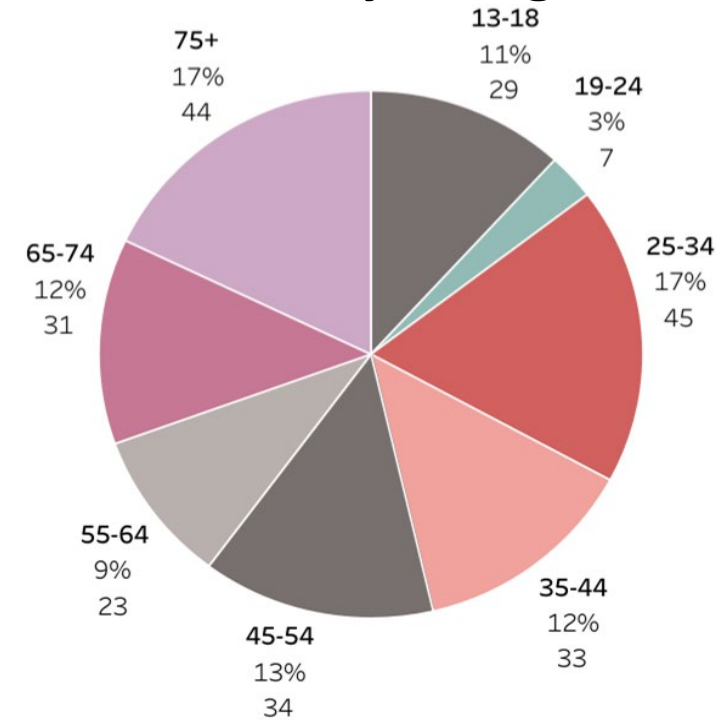
RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS & INSIGHTS

The rider base is diverse in terms of employment status and age.

Survey Question:
“What is your employment status?”



Survey Question:
“What is your age?”



**Based on 265
survey responses
collected Sep-Oct
2023*

RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS & INSIGHTS

Palo Alto Link provides independence for seniors and those with mobility limitations.

“I am getting older and need a way to get to the doctor, store, repair shops etc.”

“Link gives me **greater independence** since I no longer drive or own a car.”

“I love the **social aspect** of riding with driver and others.”

“The service is very **approachable for seniors.**”

“I anticipate that it will be **increasingly important to me as aging** inevitably restricts my other means of getting around.”

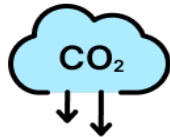


RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS & INSIGHTS

Palo Alto Link is encouraging residents to choose shared transit over high-emission private vehicle travel.

Survey Question:

“How would you have made your most recent Link trip if it wasn’t an option?”



**52% would have used
Uber/Lyft/taxi or a personal car**

Survey Question:

On your last Link trip, did you use the service to connect to other forms of transit?



**16% report using Link to connect
to other forms of transit**



FUNDING & FARE RECOVERY

As a pilot program, Palo Alto Link is currently funded with a Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Innovative Transit grant, Stanford Research Park (SRP) partnership fees, and fares. Initial pilot funding from VTA (totaling \$2 million) provides ~18 months of service.

Example monthly breakdown of funding & fare recovery

Feb 2024 Trips	VTA Contribution	SRP Contribution	Fare Revenue	Total Cost
4,647	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 31,000.00	\$ 4,647.00	\$ 140,647.00
<i>per trip costs:</i>	\$ 22.60	\$ 6.67	\$ 1.00	\$ 30.27

POTENTIAL FUNDING SCENARIOS FOR FY25

Potential Funding Scenarios for FY25

Scenario	Description	12-Month Cost (Jul '24 - Jun '25)	Net Funding Gap* (additional \$ above remaining budget estimated)
A. Current Service Level	Increase supply by 5% to meet organic demand growth	\$1,800,000	\$1,000,000
B. Service Hour Extension + Supply Growth	Scenario A plus extend the weekday schedule by 3 hours	\$2,300,000	\$1,500,000

*Net Funding Gap represents the additional funding required above the estimated remaining budget.



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