



March 18, 2024

Palo Alto City Councilmembers

Subject: Three PATMA budget scenarios for FY 2025

Dear Councilmembers,

Please find below three different PATMA budget scenarios for the next fiscal year. As you know, we received another generous allocation of Caltrain passes through the GoPass Donation Program for 2024. These three scenarios offer varying levels of bus passes, Bike Love incentives, refurbished bike distribution, and part-time contract labor that will further alleviate traffic congestion and demand for parking in Palo Alto as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support community health.

<b>Budget Scenarios</b>									
	2024-2025 Scenario 1			2024-2025 Scenario 2			2024-2025 Scenario 3		
	Cost per worker	# SOV diverted	Annual cost	Cost per worker	# SOV diverted	Annual cost	Cost per worker	# SOV diverted	Annual cost
<b>Current programs</b>									
SamTrans passes	\$ 787	27	\$ 21,249	\$ 787	50	\$ 39,350	\$ 787	90	\$ 70,830
VTA passes	\$ 1,080	32	\$ 34,560	\$ 1,080	52	\$ 56,160	\$ 1,080	90	\$ 97,200
Dumbarton Express passes	\$ 2,592	6	\$ 15,552	\$ 2,592	12	\$ 31,104	\$ 2,592	25	\$ 64,800
GoPass Donation Program	\$ -	169	\$ -	\$ -	184	\$ -	\$ -	250	\$ -
SamTrans passes (for GoPass holders)	\$ 787	4	\$ 3,148	\$ 787	8	\$ 6,296	\$ 787	20	\$ 15,740
VTA passes (for GoPass holders)	\$ 1,080	10	\$ 10,800	\$ 1,080	22	\$ 23,760	\$ 1,080	30	\$ 32,400
Current annual Lyft usage		4	\$ 10,113		8	\$ 10,113		12	\$ 10,113
Bike Love incentives	\$ 660	10	\$ 6,600	\$ 660	22	\$ 14,520	\$ 660	40	\$ 26,400
(Bike Exchange) for essential workers	\$ 400	4	\$ 4,000	\$ 400	8	\$ 8,000	\$ 400	12	\$ 12,000
Labor (program management, administration, commute survey) and business costs			\$ 89,978			\$ 177,697			\$ 225,017
<b>New potential programs</b>									
Marketing outreach support			\$ 4,000			\$ 20,000			\$ 30,000
Pass delivery admin support			\$ -			\$ 5,000			\$ 7,500
Bike safety classes (quarterly) support			\$ -			\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000
Reduced demand for parking spaces - every day, all year		266			366			569	
		<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>		<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$ 400,000</b>		<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>
Cost/year to eliminate demand for 1 parking space			\$ 751.88			\$ 1,092.89			\$ 1,054.48

Let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Justine Burt

Executive Director, Palo Alto Transportation Management Association



# **2023 Annual Report**

## **Three-Year Strategic Plan (FY2025-27)**

### **2023 Commute Survey**

Submitted to the Palo Alto City Council and Finance Committee

March 18, 2024

Prepared by:

Palo Alto Transportation Management Association  
855 El Camino Real #13A-200, Palo Alto, CA 94301  
[www.paloaltotma.org](http://www.paloaltotma.org)



# 2023 Annual Report

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

Submitted to the Palo Alto City Council

Prepared by:

Palo Alto Transportation Management Association  
855 El Camino Real #13A-200, Palo Alto, CA 94301

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March 2024



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## 2023 Annual Report

### Executive Summary

In 2023, the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA) successfully rebuilt to pre-pandemic levels of service. The number of people who did not drive to work but rather commuted by train, bus, or an active mobility option due to PATMA's program support rebounded to the level measured in early 2020.

More essential workers felt comfortable in 2023 taking the train or bus or tried PATMA's \$5/day Bike Love reward program. Office workers settled into a hybrid schedule of commuting and telework. Throughout it all, PATMA continued supporting workers who needed to commute to their workplaces with existing programs and new pilot programs.

In 2023, PATMA **diverted 266 single-occupancy vehicles from city streets, avoided 1,230,643 vehicle miles traveled, and reduced greenhouse gases by 506 tons** by providing free transit passes and after-hour Lyft rides. PATMA also continued the two programs to encourage active mobility commuting: a \$5/day reward for biking to work and a refurbished bicycle program for essential workers. With this work, PATMA supported three of the 2023 Palo Alto City Council's four priorities: economic recovery, climate change, and community health.

Further streamlining of administrative activities and bolstering of oversight and governance happened in 2023. PATMA lost one board member but gained two new board members. Overall, the size of the board grew from seven to eight members with expanded representation from the retail and food and beverage sectors.

With a foundation of dedicated staff, a committed board of directors, and the critical financial support of the City of Palo Alto, PATMA looks forward to expanding pilot programs that were begun in 2022 and 2023 and growing its impact among the community in 2024.

### Introduction

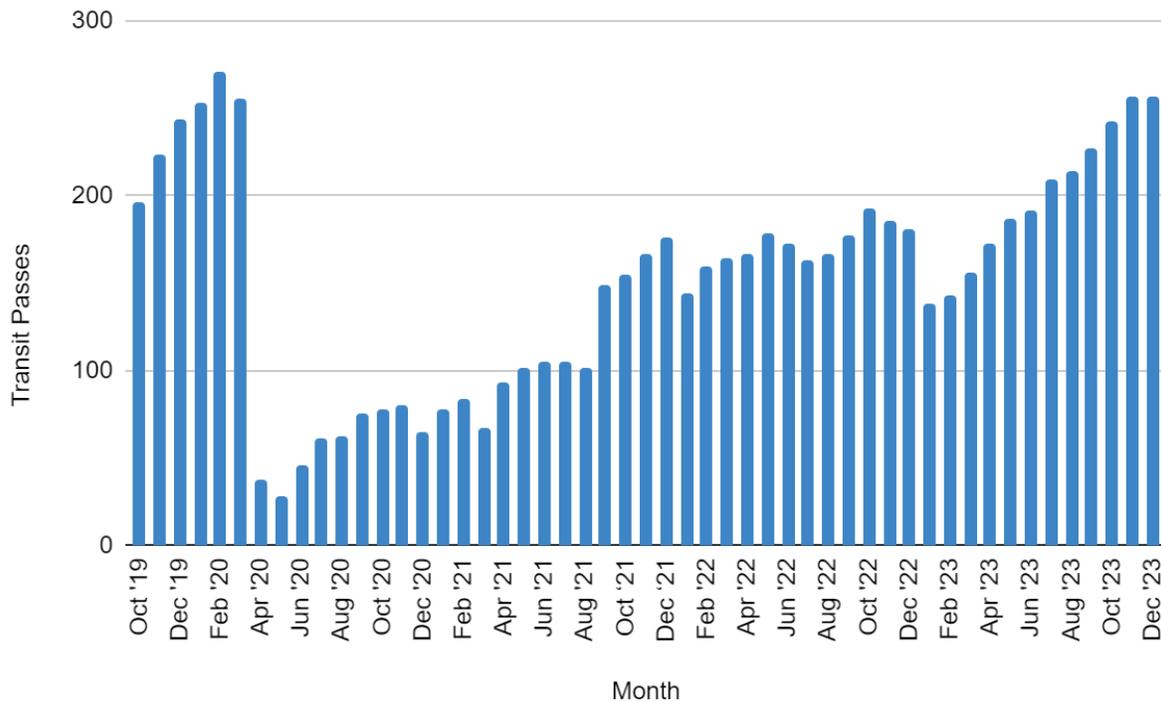
The Palo Alto TMA is a non-profit working to reduce single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips, traffic congestion, demand for parking and greenhouse gas emissions by delivering targeted transportation solutions that serve Palo Alto's diverse range of employers, employees, visitors, and residents. Financial support for this work comes primarily from the City of Palo Alto's University Avenue and California Avenue parking fund. This funding allows PATMA to provide free transit passes, \$5/day Bike Love rewards, and late night Lyft rides chiefly to low wage service sector workers in the two main commercial districts of Palo Alto.

The pandemic that hit in March 2020, dealt a blow to mass transit when more essential workers who had to be physically present to do their jobs shifted to driving to work. Figure 1 shows the



precipitous drop in transit passes in early 2020 and the steady rebuilding of transit ridership through the end of 2023.

Figure 1: Transit passes activated Q4 2019 – Q4 2023



As society learned to navigate the health and safety challenges COVID posed, PATMA worked to rebuild mass transit ridership. This work and further details about PATMA’s impacts in 2023 are provided below.

### PATMA Staff

PATMA is a non-profit staffed with contractors from ALTRANS TMA Inc., a firm specializing in transportation demand management (TDM). Part-time staff working for PATMA include:

- Justine Burt, Executive Director, PATMA
- Sana Ahmed, Program Coordinator, PATMA
- Stephen Blaylock, President, ALTRANS TMA Inc.
- Andrew Ridley, Chief Operating Officer, ALTRANS TMA Inc.



## Board of Directors

In 2023, PATMA increased the size of its board, losing one member and adding two new members. Representatives from the retail and food and beverage sectors helped diversify our board whose members at the end of the year included:

- Cedric de la Beaujardiere, OpenGov (Board Chair)
- Rob George, Philz Coffee (Treasurer and a founding board member)
- Shannon Rose McEntee, resident (Secretary)
- Philip Kamhi, City of Palo Alto
- Brad Ehikian, Premier Properties
- Sebastian Mafla, Sheraton
- Nathaniel Duncan, Patagonia (new)
- Alejandra Mier, Coupa Cafe (new)

The board meets monthly on the third Thursday at 9:00am and efficiently works through one hour of agenda items. Nearly all board members regularly attend. The public is encouraged to join these virtual meetings which happen at [this Zoom link](#). Here is a link to the recording of the [November 2023 board meeting](#).

## City of Palo Alto Priorities

While the original motivation for the Palo Alto City Council to create PATMA was to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce demand for parking downtown, each year, PATMA overlays the City Council's stated priorities to guide its work. In January 2023, the City Council announced its priorities for the year:

1. Economic Recovery and Transition
2. Climate Change and the Natural Environment: Protection and Adaptation
3. Housing for Social and Economic Balance
4. Community Health and Safety

PATMA's work supports three of these priorities: economic recovery, climate change, and community health.

### Sustainability/Climate Action Plan (S/CAP)

The City of Palo Alto set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2030 and to become carbon neutral by 2030. According to the City's 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, the most recent available, on-road transportation emissions contribute 51.7% of emissions.

The S/CAP has two mobility goals relevant to PATMA to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including:



- Reducing total vehicle miles traveled 12% by 2030, compared to a 2019 baseline, by reducing commute vehicle miles traveled 20%, visitor vehicles miles traveled 10%, and resident vehicle miles traveled 6%
- Increasing the mode share for active transportation (walking, biking) and transit from 19% to 40% of local work trips by 2030

S/CAP plans focus on launching effective programs for emissions reductions with the highest impact and lowest cost. PATMA's programs help accomplish this goal.

### PATMA's Top Five Accomplishments in 2023

Since 2020, when the number of essential workers commuting by mass transit fell dramatically, PATMA has been rebuilding program numbers. In this spirit, the following are PATMA's top five accomplishments in 2023.

1. Rebuilt the transit pass program from a low of 28 people served in May 2020 to a high of 257 in December 2023.
2. Scaled back the after-hours Lyft program to provide \$10 credits for rides after 10 pm Monday-Saturday and after 8pm on Sunday.
3. Completed two transit pass audits to ensure compliance with PATMA rules
4. Received and activated 184 Caltrain GoPasses from the Caltrain GoPass Donation Program to distribute to low wage service sector workers in 2023.
5. Received approval to continue distributing Caltrain GoPasses in 2024 to low wage service sector workers to help rebuild Caltrain ridership.

### PATMA Programs

With funding from the University Avenue Parking Fund and the California Avenue Parking Fund, PATMA provides free Clipper Cards loaded with monthly passes for Caltrain, VTA buses, SamTrans buses and Dumbarton Transbay buses. PATMA also offers credits for after-hours Lyft rides of less than five miles. During 2023, PATMA received permission from the Palo Alto City Council to expand outreach to businesses throughout Palo Alto, expanding beyond the University Ave Downtown and California Ave commercial districts.

Service sector workers who receive transit passes work primarily in food service, retail, and accommodation. Light office workers who receive transit passes or accrue Bike Love rewards include staff at Palo Alto's dentist, doctor, accounting, and law offices, and banks.

### Programs with income thresholds

#### Train and bus passes

Transit pass benefits are provided to employees earning less than \$70,000 per year who work in Downtown and Cal Ave areas, as well as commercial areas along the major transit corridors of El Camino Real and San Antonio Rd.

Pilot: Refurbished bicycles

In 2023, PATMA continued working with local non-profit Bike Exchange for a pilot program to provide four refurbished bicycles and safety gear to essential workers. This pilot is open to workers making less than \$70,000/year. Figure 2 shows one Palo Alto-based essential worker receiving her refurbished bicycle.

*Figure 2: Essential worker Linda Lui taking delivery of her refurbished bicycle from Palo Alto-based non-profit Bike Exchange*



Programs without income thresholds

Lyft after-hours rides of less than five miles

In 2023, PATMA scaled back the Lyft program to provide rides for workers commuting less than five miles late at night after transit stops running. This change is saving the program about \$1,000/month.

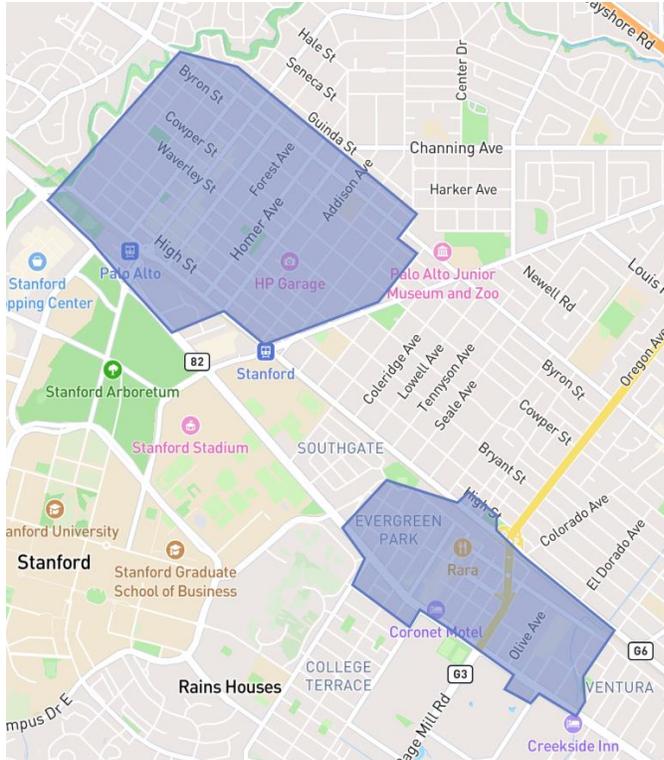
Pilot: Bike Love rewards

The Bike Love smartphone app provides daily incentives for active mode first-mile commute trips to transit and active mode commutes between home and work, of \$5/day up to \$599 per year per commuter. Automated travel mode detection identifies eligible bike, e-bike, e-scooter, and e-skateboard trips. Eligibility is determined by trips that stop or start within geofences

around 30 Caltrain stations and two major Palo Alto job centers. Incentive dollars are instantly redeemable at local merchants via reloadable Apple/Google Wallet Virtual Visa cards, a new type of payment card.

Figure 3 shows the current geofences that mark commute destinations that earn workers rewards.

Figure 3: Bike Love geofence boundaries



In 2023, 49% of transactions to redeem rewards happened in Palo Alto, in support of the City Council’s 2023 priority for economic recovery. The ability of Bike Love users to redeem incentives at Palo Alto businesses keeps dollars in the local economy. Figure 4 provides detail about where Bike Love users are spending their reward funds.

Figure 4: Where Bike Love rewards are spent

	All	Palo Alto	Other cities	Amazon or online	Menlo Park	San Francisco	Mountain View	Sunnyvale	Redwood City	San Carlos
Transaction value (\$)	15,196	6,095	3,214	2,844	1,137	593	509	316	253	235
Number of transactions	804	395	164	74	67	35	19	13	22	15

Source: Motion



Bike Love app programmers at Motion gather this information from specific merchant identification numbers where rewards are redeemed.

For a quick overview video explaining the app, please visit [Bike Love in 80 seconds \(video\)](#).

## Benefits of PATMA Programs

While PATMA programs save service workers money on their commutes, many other benefits of these programs accrue to local businesses, workers, City government, and Palo Alto residents.

### Businesses

For business owners and managers, PATMA’s mode shift work gives them a competitive advantage over similar businesses in nearby cities. Free transit passes help shops, restaurants and hotels attract and retain workers in competitive industries with high rates of staff turnover.

### Workers

Workers who stop driving not only save money on variable personal vehicle costs such as gasoline, maintenance, and repairs, they also escape the stress of having to drive in traffic congestion. The workers who commute by active modes enjoy the benefits of exercise that allow them to arrive at work energized and refreshed.

### City of Palo Alto

Municipal governments impact the wellbeing of residents and workers within the city’s boundaries, and PATMA’s programs on the City’s behalf reduce traffic congestion, free up parking spaces in commercial areas, and enhance the quality of life for residents by reducing the number of cars parked in neighborhoods.

## Program Results

The results of the TMA’s program management, outreach, and program operation labor in Figures 5-9 depict the number of SOV commuters shifted, number of transit passes distributed at specific businesses in Palo Alto, the cost per SOV avoided, the number of avoided vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gases (in tons) reduced.

Figure 5: Number of commuters diverted from single-occupancy vehicles

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Transit passes	145.0	183.6	216.6	251.6
Lyft	3.5	3.9	3.8	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>148.5</b>	<b>187.5</b>	<b>220.4</b>	<b>252.5</b>



Averaging the number of commuters diverted from single-occupancy vehicles over the four quarters yields 202.2. Figure 6 includes transit passes purchased and GoPasses donated by Caltrain.

Figure 6: Number of transit passes distributed by employer in December 2023

Organization	Transit passes	Organization	Transit passes	Organization	Transit passes	Organization	Transit passes
Sheraton	29	Sephora	3	Blue Bottle Coffee	1	Nola Restaurant & Bar	1
Westin Hotel	19	Verve Coffee Roasters	3	Buca di Beppo	1	Onigilly	1
Nobu Hotel	15	Watercourse Way	3	Cafe Venetia	1	Protege restaurant	1
Downtown Streets Team	12	West Elm	3	City National Bank	1	Reposado	1
Patagonia	12	Avenidas	2	Coconuts Caribbean bar and restaurant	1	Reservoir Engineering Research Institute	1
Apple	10	Bjelajac Dental Practice	2	Connie Ho MD	1	Right at Home Peninsula	1
Lima Ruby	10	Cafe 220	2	Curry Pizza	1	Scotty's restaurant	1
Crepevine	8	Cardinal Hotel	2	Downtown Kindercare	1	Smiles By Pai	1
Whole Foods	8	Creamery	2	Dr. Stan Exceptional Dentistry	1	Somi Somi	1
Coupa Cafe	5	Palo Alto Inn	2	Ettan Restaurant	1	Summerwinds Nursery	1
Lytton Gardens (Front Porch)	4	Philz Coffee	2	Graduate Hotel	1	Sweetgreen	1
Palo Alto Bicycles	4	San Agus	2	Guckenheimer: Palo Alto Club	1	The Cobblery	1
SkinSpirit	4	Sekoya Lounge & Kitchen	2	HanaHaus	1	The Palo Alto Inn	1
Zareen's	4	Starbucks	2	Imagina Daycare	1	The Real Real	1
Bar Zola	3	Summit Bicycles	2	KinderCare Learning Companies	1	Trader Joes	1
Christine Hansen DDS & Associates	3	Tacolicious	2	Kris Hamamoto DDS, Inc.	1	US Bank (formerly Union Bank )	1
Front Porch (Lytton Garden)	3	Tamarine restaurant	2	La Bodeguita del Medio restaurant	1	Walgreens Community	1



Organization	Transit passes	Organization	Transit passes	Organization	Transit passes	Organization	Transit passes
Senior Apartments)						Pharmacy	
Joya Restaurant	3	Vizavoo Salon	2	Macs Smoke Shop	1	ZombieRunner	1
Local Union 271	3	Webster House	2	Mademoiselle Colette	1		
Mollie Stones	3	Yayoi	2	Meyhause	1		
Oren's Hummus Shop	3	Arya Steakhouse	1	Naschmarkt restaurant	1		
Rangoon Ruby	3	Block Advisors	1	Nidhi Pai, DMD	1		

Figure 7: Cost per SOV avoided per year

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Transit pass subsidy – pass outlay	\$589	\$490	\$448	\$507
Lyft program	\$2,603	\$2,771	\$1,602	\$2,681

Figure 8: Avoided vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Transit pass subsidy	224,024	282,465	333,216	387,043
Lyft	1,241	1,281	1,114	260
<b>Total VMT reduced</b>	<b>225,264</b>	<b>283,745</b>	<b>334,330</b>	<b>387,304</b>

Totalled for the 2023 calendar year, PATMA programs reduced vehicle miles traveled by 1,230,643.

Figure 9: Greenhouse gases reduced (tons)

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Transit passes and Lyft	93	117	137	159

In CY 2023, PATMA reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 506 tons.



## Testimonials

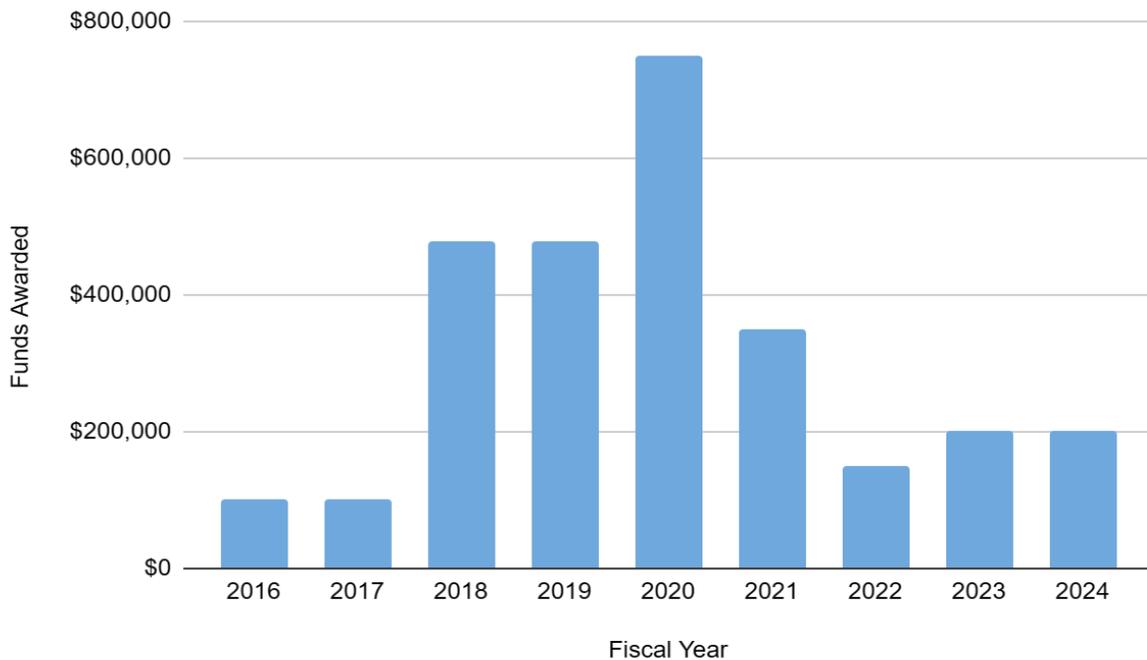
The following feedback from employees of local businesses shows how much PATMA’s programs mean to the community.

- “I use the TMA Caltrain pass and it has been amazing. Plus I get my steps in. I tell everyone I know how great this program is!” - Norma M.
- “I like taking Caltrain because it goes closer to where I need to go compared to the bus.” - Lynn F.
- “I love taking Caltrain!” - Shelby S.

## Budget

The non-profit demonstrated program results which helped to grow its City funding allocation until 2020 when the pandemic altered commuting habits and parking fund revenues fell dramatically. Figure 10 shows the history of PATMA’s funding allocations since FY 2016.

Figure 10: PATMA funding since inception



Since 2020, PATMA has worked hard to do more with less and build back the number of workers it supports with mode shift. Figure 11 shows income sources and expenditures in CY 2023.



Figure 11: Detailed 2023 income and expenses

Category	Jan '23	Feb '23	Mar '23	Apr '23	May '23	Jun '23	Jul '23	Aug '23	Sept '23	Oct '23	Nov '23	Dec '23
Beginning balance on 1/1/2023: \$118,336.65												
<b>INCOME</b>												
City of Palo Alto		\$50,000	\$50,000					\$100,000				\$50,000
Transp Research Bd		\$25,000										
Memberships					\$2,500						\$650	\$100
Moved from separate account											\$2,500	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$0	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$3,150	\$50,100
<b>EXPENSES</b>												
Altrans Management	\$6,149	\$5,516	\$7,255	\$7,812	\$6,064	\$7,131	\$7,030	\$6,768	\$6,713	\$6,614	\$5,998	\$6,695
Biz (rent, office, ins, etc)	\$419	\$986	\$792	\$236	-\$813	\$2,415	\$2,293	\$260	\$595	\$359	\$253	\$430
Lyft	\$899	\$1,070	\$886	\$1,210	\$1,043	\$1,201		\$2,574		\$2,092	\$254	\$236
Pgm Operation - Altrans Labor	\$6,149	\$5,516	\$7,255	\$7,812	\$6,064	\$7,131	\$7,030	\$6,768	\$6,713	\$6,614	\$5,998	\$6,695
Adjusted Transit - clipper	\$16,113	\$5,012	\$7,284	\$7,516	\$13,142	\$7,847	\$8,197	\$8,850	\$8,982	\$13,314	\$10,380	\$3,416
Transit - refunds	-\$273		-\$90		-\$1,897	-\$627				-\$180		-\$560
Commute Survey											\$12,500	
TRB Grant		\$18,000	\$22,500									
Bike Love Program Expenses	\$2,122	\$1,653	\$8,749	\$1,191	\$2,453	\$1,960		\$2,105	\$308	\$3,263	\$2,124	\$2,033
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$29,456	\$36,100	\$54,630	\$25,777	\$26,057	\$27,058	\$24,551	\$27,324	\$23,312	\$32,075	\$37,507	\$18,945
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	-\$29,456	\$38,900	-\$4,630	-\$25,777	-\$23,557	-\$27,058	-\$24,551	\$72,676	-\$23,312	-\$32,075	-\$34,357	\$31,155
Ending balance on 12/31/2023: \$36,536.74												

Management tasks include program oversight, communications with stakeholders, finance and accounting activities, managing board meetings, maintaining 501c3 non-profit status, tax filing, and pursuing business development opportunities to diversify funding sources.

Program operation labor involves processing new transit pass requests, communicating about pass renewals, purchasing new passes, replacing lost passes, distributing new passes, troubleshooting, and monitoring accounts.

In 2023, City Council recommended PATMA use up to \$25,000 of its budget to expand outreach efforts beyond University Ave Downtown and California Ave. PATMA conducted outreach along El Camino Real and San Antonio Rd visiting dozens of businesses. As a result, six passes were processed and distributed to a hotel, dentist and plant nursery. Building on this effort, additional outreach efforts later in FY 2023-2024 yielded more passes distributed at restaurants, a café, a daycare center, and a spa.

Figures 12 and 13 provide pie charts that show details of income and expenses.

Figure 12: Overview of 2023 income<sup>1</sup>

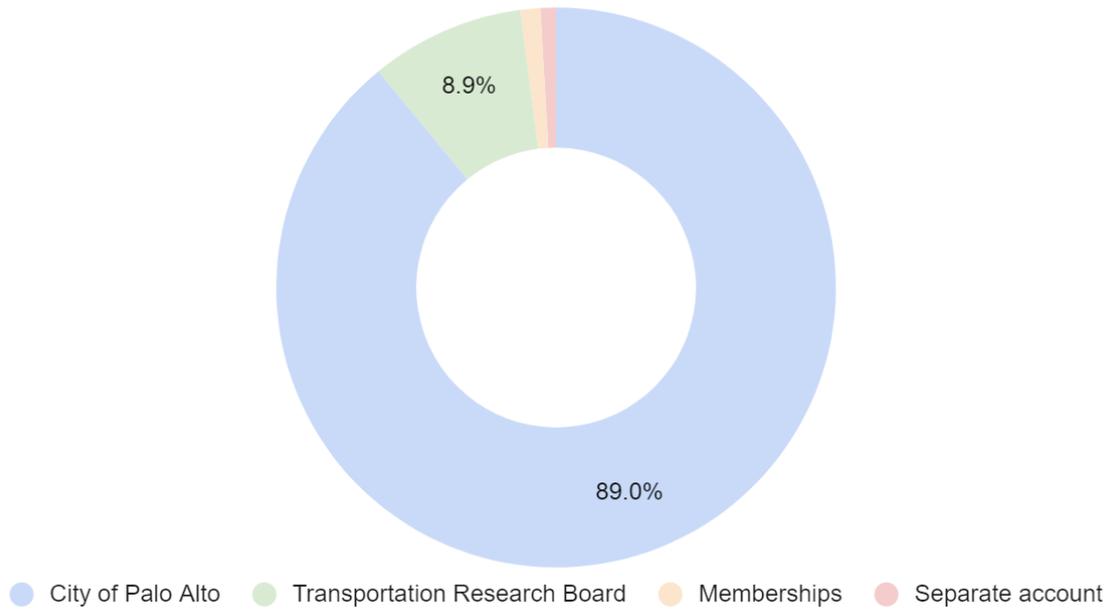
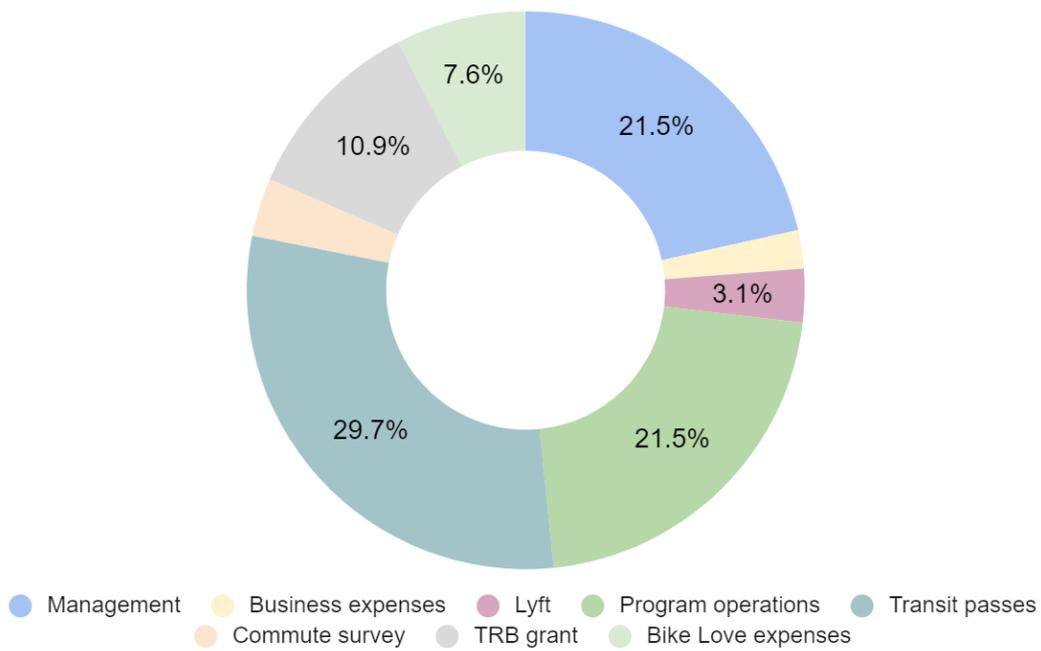


Figure 13: Overview of 2023 expenses



<sup>1</sup> Separate account refers to leftover funds from a pilot program early in PATMA’s history.



## Conclusion

When PATMA staff drop off new transit passes for essential workers, staff regularly hear expressions of gratitude about how the transit passes improve workers' quality of life, allow them to stay focused at work, and reduce their family's transportation costs. Helping people is part of what makes mode shift work gratifying for the non-profit's staff, but there is more to be done with the on-going guidance of the board of directors and the **City of Palo Alto's vital support.**

PATMA's staff and board will continue to look for ways to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce demand for parking, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting and engaging local businesses, their workers, the City of Palo Alto, and residents. In 2024, an expansion of the refurbished bike pilot, growing the number of active Bike Love users, conducting outreach at the Stanford Mall and Channing House, and distributing Caltrain's substantial allocation of GoPasses for 2024 are the main ways PATMA will build on its successful programs and deepen its impact next year.



# Three Year Strategic Plan

**July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027**

Submitted to the Palo Alto City Council

Prepared by:

Palo Alto Transportation Management Association  
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[March 2024](#)



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## **PATMA's Three Year Strategic Plan**

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027

### **Executive Summary**

The Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA) supports local businesses with transportation demand management programs that help companies attract and retain workers: free transit passes, rewards for active mobility commutes, and after-hours Lyft rides less than five miles. For the past four years, PATMA has been rebuilding from a pandemic-induced 90% drop in transit pass requests in early 2020.

In December 2023, PATMA's programs resulted in a reduction of demand for 266 parking spaces which yields benefits every day, all year. Building on this success, our strategic plan details the following goals for the next three years.

- Year 1: Outreach at the Stanford Mall, Channing House, and along El Camino Real to increase distribution of transit passes to low wage service sector workers currently driving to work; and expansion of active mobility programs and outreach to encourage workers who commute less than 10 miles
- Year 2: Expand active mobility programs and outreach; expand incentives for workers willing to leave their car at home; educate about expanded mobility options to reassure workers that they can get where they need to go without using a personal vehicle
- Year 3: Support the evolution of disjointed transportation options (personal vehicles, ride hailing, vehicle rental, trains, buses, and active mobility) into a low-carbon, seamless, integrated system in order that workers can travel to where they need to go without owning a personal vehicle

The recent change in City policy allowing the TMA to help workers switch to sustainable transportation modes at Stanford Mall and along El Camino Real, as well as discovery of opportunities at Channing House, provides a roadmap for dramatic growth in essential workers served in the next year. To support more workers to switch from single occupancy vehicles to train, bus or active mobility, PATMA requests City funding of \$400,000 for Fiscal Year 2025.

### **Introduction**

The Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA) is leading efforts to reshape commute behaviors in town. Abundant mass transit, active mobility (bicycle, electric scooter, walking), on-demand car sharing options as well as trip planning apps mean some workers who live and work near major transit pipelines like Caltrain, VTA 22/522, SamTrans ECR, and the Dumbarton Express can commute quickly and efficiently without needing to own a personal



vehicle. In this spirit, PATMA provides information and incentives that encourage workers to shift out of their single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and into low-carbon transportation options.

Building on the foundation of our mission and core values, listed in Figure 1, each year PATMA overlays the City Council’s strategic priorities to focus our non-profit’s efforts. In January 2024, the Palo Alto City Council set their strategic priorities for the year as:

1. Climate Change & Natural Environment – Protection & Adaptation
2. Community Health, Safety, Wellness & Belonging
3. Economic Development & Transition
4. Housing for Social & Economic Balance

PATMA’s programs help address three of these four priorities: economic recovery, climate change, and community health by providing essential workers – mostly in food service, retail, and accommodation – with commute counseling, access to free transit passes, rewards for bicycling to work, and late night ride-sharing services.

Figure 1: PATMA’s mission and core values

*Mission*

Better commutes for everyone

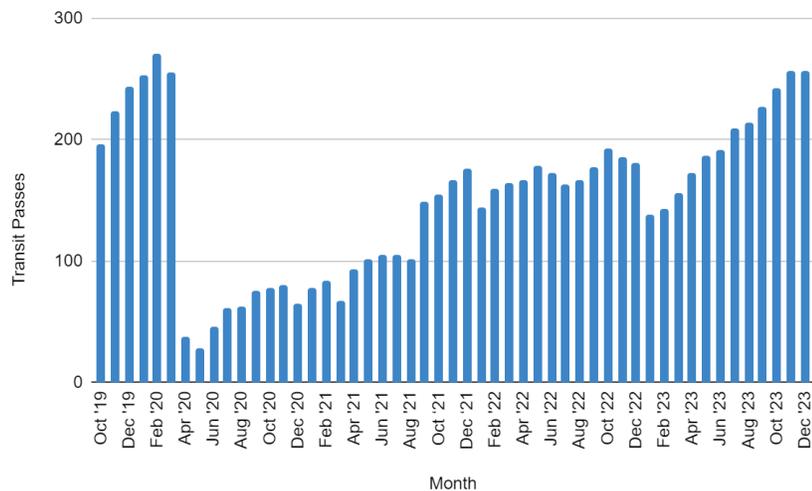
*Core values*

- Traffic – lighten traffic congestion
- Parking – reduce demand for parking in commercial areas
- Climate change – transition to a zero-emission transportation system
- Equity – fair outcomes, treatment and opportunities for all
- Local businesses – help local businesses attract and retain employees
- Health – encourage community health

Figure 2 shows that PATMA successfully rebuilt the number of workers served after a precipitous drop in transit pass demand in early 2020. With

expanded outreach, development of new programs, and diversified funding sources, PATMA was able to reduce the cost per SOV diverted, greenhouse gases (GHGs) emissions, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Figure 2: Passes activated for PATMA clients



## PATMA Programs

### Programs with income thresholds

#### Transit Passes

Currently, PATMA focuses on supporting essential workers in the Downtown and California Ave commercial districts. If these workers are driving to work, they can receive free Caltrain, VTA, SamTrans, or Dumbarton Transbay bus passes.

#### Refurbished Bicycles

In 2022, PATMA piloted a refurbished bicycle program with the local non-profit [Bike Exchange](#). This refurbished bicycle program is for essential workers in Palo Alto making less than \$70,000/year who would like to bike to work but do not own a bicycle. If they also need any safety equipment – helmet, lock, lights – Bike Exchange will include these for each essential worker receiving a refurbished bike.

### Programs without income thresholds

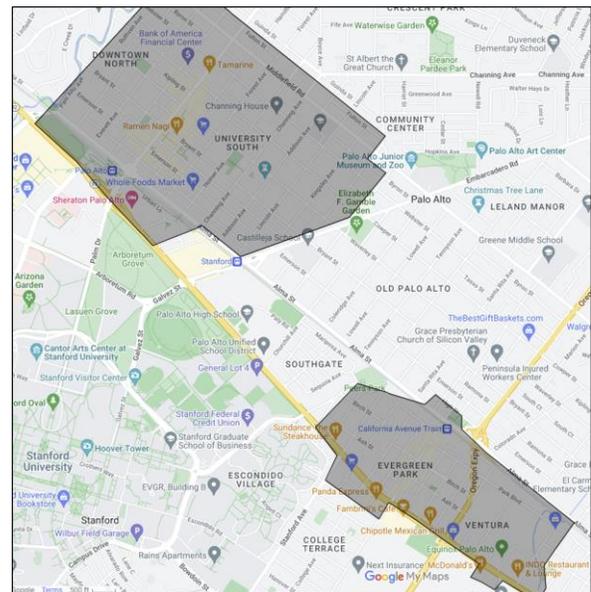
#### After hours Lyft rides

Workers who live less than five miles from work and who need to travel home from work late at night when mass transit is not running can receive a \$10 Lyft credit per ride. There is no income limit for this program.

#### Bike Love

In 2022, PATMA launched the [Bike Love](#) app which provides \$5/day up to \$600/year to workers Downtown and on Cal Ave to encourage commuters to leave their cars at home and bike or e-scooter to work. Unlike the transit pass program, there are no income restrictions for the Bike Love program. The app was designed to provide attractive financial rewards to all workers in Downtown and on Cal Ave in order to build active mobility habits. See Figure 3 for a map of Bike Love program boundaries within which workers earn rewards. The Bike Love app also rewards travel to all 30 Caltrain stations for commuters who would be incentivized to bike or scooter to Caltrain and take the train to work.

Figure 3: Geofenced areas for Bike Love rewards



Bike Love’s commuter location tracking confirms bike, e-bike, e-scooter, and e-skateboard trips. Within a few minutes of arrival, incentive dollars may be redeemed by the commuter at local



merchants via Apple/Google Wallet electronic debit cards. When some of the more than 100 on-boarded Bike Love app users redeem rewards at Palo Alto businesses, app programmers at Motion collect merchant identification numbers which allow them to track where reward dollars are spent. About half of reward dollars are redeemed at Palo Alto-based businesses which is another way that PATMA supports local businesses and multiplies program impact to benefit the local economy.

### Single-occupancy vehicles diverted

In December 2023, PATMA reduced demand for 266 parking spaces by helping service workers in Palo Alto access train and bus passes, providing late night Lyft rides, and Bike Love rewards. Details about PATMA's December 2023 metrics include 257 active transit passes, as well as Lyft rides and bicycle trips.

#### Train and bus passes activated (December 2023)

- **169** GoPasses (without bus passes)
- **11** GoPasses with VTA pass
- **4** GoPasses with SamTrans pass
- **31** VTA passes
- **33** SamTrans passes
- **6** Dumbarton Express passes
- **3** Caltrain passes

#### Lyft (December 2023):

- **3** active riders
- **34** rides taken (one-way trips)
- **105.9** miles covered
- **338.23** transaction amount

#### Bike Love (December 2023):

- **6** people bicycling to work (three or more times/week)<sup>1</sup>
- **518** miles logged

For the 12-month period ending December 31, 2022, PATMA programs **avoided 1,230,643 vehicle miles traveled, and reduced greenhouse gases by 506 tons** by providing free transit passes and after-hour Lyft rides.

## Value of Palo Alto TMA

### Competitive Advantage for Local Businesses

Local businesses in the Downtown and Cal Ave areas contribute to the wonderful quality of life in Palo Alto. In turn, PATMA's transit pass programs and active mobility programs support local businesses by giving them a **competitive advantage to attract and retain staff**. As the primary

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<sup>1</sup> In third quarter 2023, 11 people on average bicycled logged trips to work.

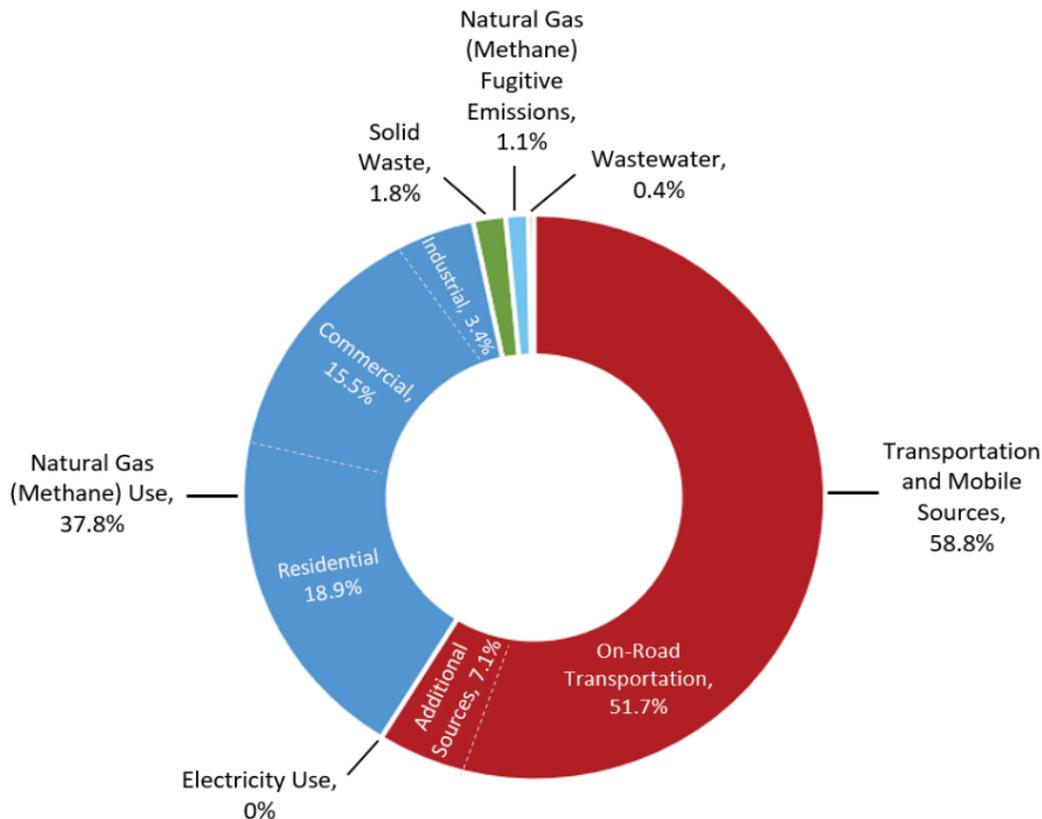
funder of PATMA’s cost-effective programs, the City demonstrates its leadership on equity and climate change issues by supporting PATMA.

### Supporting Palo Alto’s Sustainability/Climate Action Plan Work

In 2016, the City of Palo Alto set an ambitious overall GHG emissions reduction goal: 80% below 1990 levels by 2030. As of 2021, the City has reduced emissions to 53.9% below the 1990 level, despite a population increase of 19.5 percent during that same time period. Of that 53.9 percent reduction to date, 44.2 percent came from achieving carbon neutrality for the City’s electricity portfolio, 28.6 percent from declines in transportation emissions, 13.9 percent from reduction in natural gas (methane) consumption, 11.5 percent from declines in solid waste emissions, and 1.7 percent from declines in wastewater-related emissions. To reduce emissions further, one of Palo Alto’s Sustainability/Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) goals is to increase the mode share for active transportation modes (walking, biking, and transit) from 19% to 40% of local work trips by 2030.

According to Palo Alto’s 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, 51.7% of Palo Alto’s GHG emissions come from on-road transportation sources, as seen in Figure 4.

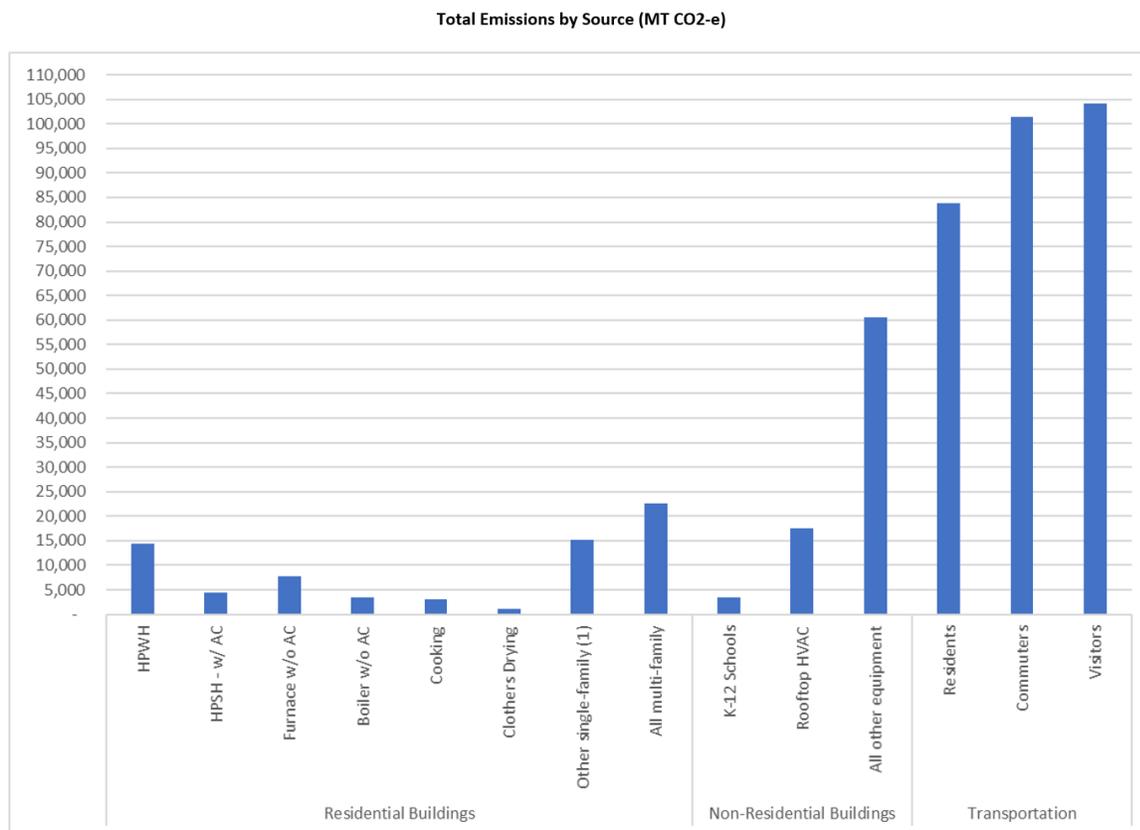
Figure 4: 2021 greenhouse gas emissions in Palo Alto by sector



Source: [June 5, 2023 Report to Palo Alto City Council, Approval of 2023-2025 S/CAP Workplan](#)

When looking at total emissions by source, commuters contribute the second highest amount of greenhouse gases after visitors. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: 2020 greenhouse gas emissions by source



Source: [June 5, 2023 Report to Palo Alto City Council, Approval of 2023-2025 S/CAP Workplan](#)

PATMA is positioned to play a key role in facilitating GHG emission reductions by **raising awareness about the benefits of mode shift, offering information about sustainable commute options through commute counseling, and providing incentives for mode shift.**

### Three-Year Strategic Planning

At meetings in November 2023 through February 2024, PATMA’s Board of Directors conducted strategic planning for the next three years. Input gathered informs PATMA’s path forward with goals, strategies, and objectives for 2024-2027.

#### Year 1 (FY 2024-25)

##### Goals

- Mode shift single occupancy vehicle (SOV) drivers to mass transit or active mobility
- Reduce demand for parking spaces – every day, all year



- Help rebuild mass transit ridership
- Increase the number of people commuting by active mobility (bicycle, e-scooter, walking)
- Increase PATMA program administration efficiency
- Support local businesses to attract and retain workers
- Support City of Palo Alto Sustainability/Climate Action Plan goals to reduce greenhouse gases

### Strategies

- Expand marketing collateral for transit passes and active mobility
  - Full-page flyer with all PATMA programs and other mode shift programs that serve Palo Alto (free train and bus passes, Bike Love rewards, refurbished bikes, Palo Alto Link, Guaranteed Ride Home, list of car share and car rental options)
  - ARC GIS map of transit pipelines and bike routes to Palo Alto from nearby cities
  - Articles and opinion pieces in local newspapers
  - Window clings (non-adhesive decal) for businesses that receive PATMA incentives
  - T-shirts with PATMA's new, shorter mission statement
- Market PATMA programs at the Stanford Mall, Channing House, along El Camino Real, and to businesses that currently do not receive PATMA incentives
- Pilot programs that encourage active mobility – bike safety classes, route planning, e-bike lending program
- Train managers at businesses with the largest number of transit passes about Clipper Card best practices
- Encourage transit pass users to load Clipper Card onto their phone with the Clippercard.com app
- Deepen relationships with non-profit organizations that have similar missions and goals (Friends of Caltrain, Seamless Bay Area, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition)
- Study hypothesis that having a transit pass connected with a service sector job results in higher employee retention

### Objectives

- # parking spaces not needed
- # train and bus passes provided to Palo Alto workers making less than \$70,000/year
- # people taking active mobility to work
- # businesses with PATMA membership
- Reduce cost/SOV diverted
- Grow the number of Bike Love app users biking to work at least 3x/week

## Year 2 (FY 2025-26)

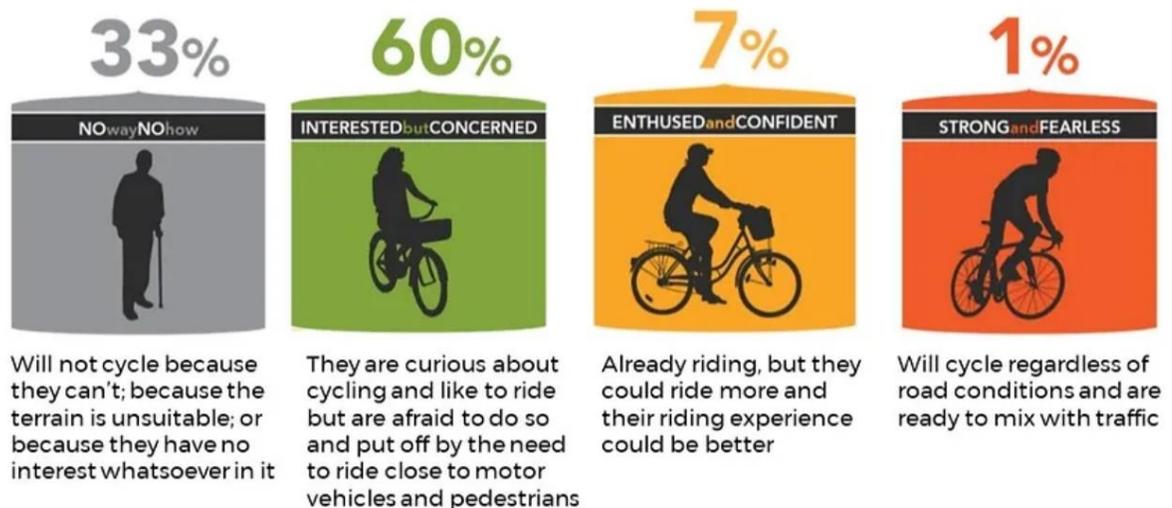
### Goals

- Help expand clean transportation options available to people who work in Palo Alto so they do not need to own a personal vehicle
- Support safety of commuters using active mobility
- Support City of Palo Alto goals to reduce greenhouse gases from on-road transportation and increase number of commuters using active mobility
- Reduce demand for parking spaces – every day, all year
- Support local businesses to attract and retain workers
- Diversify funding sources
- Provide TDM services Citywide
- Expand awareness of PATMA among people who work in Palo Alto

### Strategies

- Expand PATMA’s toolkit of information and incentives to encourage mode shift
- Expand pilot active mobility education programs that were effective in 2024-25 to shift cyclists up a level (to the right in Figure 6)

Figure 6: Four types of cyclists (Portland, OR study)



Source: Roger Geller, City of Portland

- Develop case studies of workers using active mobility programs that benefited from not driving to work



## Objectives

- # parking spaces not needed
- # people taking active mobility to work
- # of people trained in defensive cycling techniques
- # businesses with PATMA membership

## Year 3 (FY 2026-27)

### Goals

- Support the evolution of our region's disjointed transportation options (personal vehicles, ride hailing, vehicle rental, mass transit, and active mobility) into a low-carbon, seamless, integrated system
- Determine what is missing to help workers get where they need to go without owning a personal vehicle

### Strategies

- Expand PATMA's toolkit of information and incentives to encourage mode shift
- Test new technology mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) planning and payment options as they become available

## Objectives

- # parking spaces not needed
- # train and bus passes provided to Palo Alto workers making less than \$70,000/year
- # people taking active mobility to work
- # businesses with PATMA membership

## Workplan

### Year 1

In the next year, PATMA plans to aggressively expand the number of SOVs diverted given recent discoveries of large numbers of retail and service sector employees in our service territory at the Stanford Mall and Channing House. These areas are well-served by transit and offer a significant opportunity to reduce congestion and realize mode shift.

The following seven tasks are planned for FY 2025:

1. Create a marketing plan
2. Promote train and bus passes, the Bike Love app, and refurbished bicycle program
3. Provide commute counseling and route planning
4. Distribute train and bus passes and streamline program administration
5. Expand the number of active Bike Love app users



6. Pilot an e-bike lending program for 5 low wage service sector workers who live 3-10 miles from work
7. Conduct the 2024 commute survey

The timeframe for each task is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Year 1 workplan

	7/24	8/24	9/24	10/24	11/24	12/24	1/25	2/25	3/25	4/25	5/25	6/25
Task 1 – Marketing plan												
Task 2 – Program promotion												
Task 3 – Commute counseling												
Task 4 – Administer transit passes												
Task 5 – Expand # of Bike Love users												
Task 6 – E-bike lending pilot												
Task 7 – Commute survey												

With the roll out of Caltrain’s electrification project in fall 2024, we expect additional riders will be attracted to mass transit.

### Year 2

In FY 2026, PATMA will continue to monitor developments for Mobility as a Service apps that help riders more efficiently plan, pay for, and transfer between multiple commute modes, as well as the Seamless Bay Area project, and support development of the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update.

### Year 3

In FY 2027, we will identify service gaps to develop new programs and implement emerging mobility technology while continuing to expand programs that divert SOVs and reduce traffic congestion Downtown, in the Cal Ave business district, and in other parts of the city. We will expand active mobility programs for commuters who live less than 10 miles from work.

## Three Budget Scenarios

PATMA offers three budget scenarios for FY 2025, as seen in Figure 8. A small budget would represent a lower level of service than currently provided which would result in lower numbers of SOVs removed from area roads. The medium budget would allow PATMA to take at least an additional 100 cars off the road and the larger budget would allow us to deepen relationships with managers in business sectors with essential workers to remind them about our programs that help them attract and retain employees. The larger budget would provide more transit passes and more incentives to encourage SOV drivers who are on the fence about mode shift to switch over.



Figure 8: Small, medium and larger budget options for FY 2025

Small budget (\$200,000)	Medium budget (\$400,000)	Larger budget (\$600,000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two quarter-time staff</li> <li>• Promotion of free train and bus passes for low wage service sector workers</li> <li>• Customer service for pass administration</li> <li>• Annual commute survey</li> <li>• Quarterly reports</li> <li>• Annual report</li> <li>• Three-year strategic plan</li> <li>• Quarterly board meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two half-time staff</li> <li>• Expanded promotion of free train and bus passes for low wage service sectors workers – Stanford Mall, Channing House, South El Camino Real, University Ave., and California Ave.</li> <li>• Bike Love app providing \$5/day rewards</li> <li>• Adult bike safety classes – online basics and in-person practice</li> <li>• Annual commute survey</li> <li>• Quarterly reports</li> <li>• Annual report</li> <li>• Three-year strategic plan</li> <li>• Monthly board meetings (quick, efficient one hour meetings where 8 board members give feedback and support on emerging issues)</li> <li>• RideAmigos – pilot ride management platform for commute rewards</li> <li>• Electric bike pilot program for 5 low wage service sector workers commuting from Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Mountain View</li> <li>• Develop e-bike case studies to show the benefits of active commute to help convince others to mode shift</li> <li>• Route planning - help people considering a bike commute to plan a safe route to work</li> <li>• 8 refurbished bikes for low wage service sector workers</li> <li>• Publicity to raise awareness about PATMA’s work - articles and opinion pieces in local papers</li> </ul>	<p>Same as Medium budget plus additional SOVs removed from traffic due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citywide service</li> <li>• Higher level of effort for marketing – labor, collateral</li> <li>• More train and bus passes distributed at current and additional businesses</li> <li>• Offer Bike Love to more organizations</li> <li>• Expanded program of RideAmigos incentives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 266 parking spaces freed falling to 200 with transit pass attrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 366 parking spaces freed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 569 parking spaces freed</li> </ul>

The medium budget is a bit above the budget spending PATMA has been running and would allow us to invest funding into programs and approaches that have proven to work, as well as try a new pilot to encourage more active mobility. A larger budget would allow us to provide services Citywide and provide more mode shift incentives.

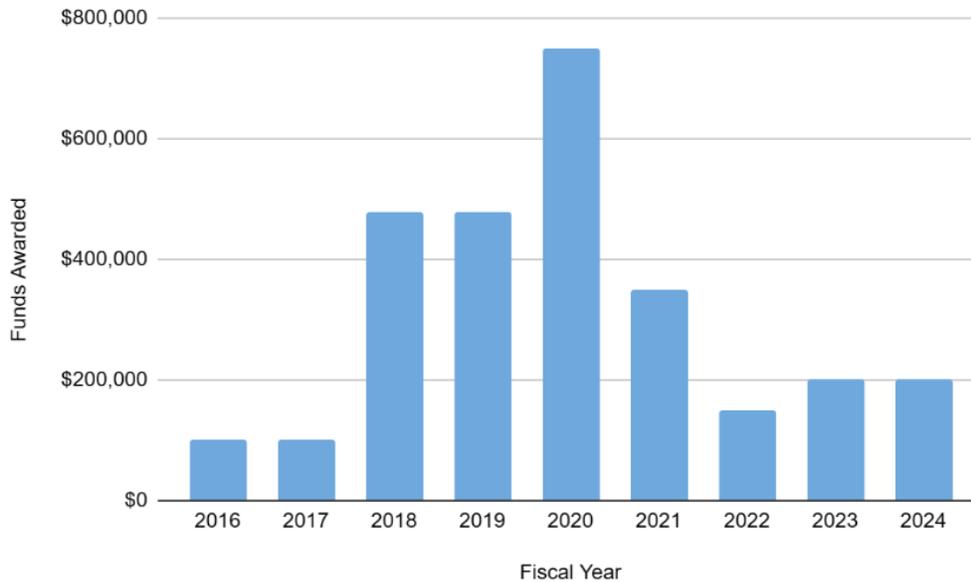


## Budget History and Projections

### Budget History

Looking back at funding levels since the start of the Palo Alto TMA, the program grew over several years and demonstrated cost-effective successes with SOV diversion, GHG reductions, and VMT reductions until the pandemic hit. Figure 9 shows historic budget trends.

Figure 9: PATMA funding since inception



### Budget for FY 2024

As we seek to grow program participation further, PATMA’s funding request for FY 2024 is \$400,000.

Reasons that factor into this funding level request include:

- PATMA has identified three areas in town with large numbers of low wage service sector workers and constrained parking options that could help shift large numbers of people to mass transit and active commutes (Stanford Mall, Channing House, and south El Camino Real)
- PATMA already has strong relationships with local business managers and articulates clear value propositions for workers and managers. Building on this, the main additional cost of removing demand for parking spaces around town involves the cost of bus passes and Bike Love rewards.

With cost of living adjustments from the FY 2024 budget, the continued availability of free GoPasses from Caltrain, and income of \$400,000 from the City of Palo Alto, PATMA projects the following budget for FY 2024 in Figure 10.



Figure 10: FY 2025 Budget Projection

Category	Jul '24	Aug '24	Sept '24	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24	Jan '25	Feb '25	Mar '25	Apr '25	May '25	Jun '25
<b>INCOME</b>												
City of Palo Alto			\$50,000		\$100,000			\$100,000			\$100,000	
Memberships						\$750	\$800				\$2,500	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			\$50,000		\$100,000	\$750	\$800	\$100,000			\$102,500	
<b>EXPENSES</b>												
Altrans management	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992
Biz (rent, office, ins, etc)	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$204	\$2,450	\$1,231
Lyft	\$338	\$338	\$338	\$338	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$338	\$338	\$338	\$338
Pgm Operation - ALTRANS labor	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992	\$6,992
Adjusted transit - Clipper Cards	\$9,500	\$9,880	\$10,275	\$10,686	\$11,114	\$11,447	\$11,790	\$12,144	\$12,630	\$13,135	\$13,661	\$14,207
Transit - refunds	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275	-\$275
Commute survey			\$5,000	\$5,000								
Bike Love expenses	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$6,000	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$26,152	\$26,532	\$31,927	\$32,338	\$27,827	\$28,161	\$28,504	\$28,858	\$32,882	\$29,787	\$32,558	\$31,885
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	-\$26,152	-\$26,532	\$18,073	-\$32,338	\$72,173	-\$27,411	-\$27,704	\$71,142	-\$32,882	-\$29,787	\$69,942	-\$31,885

As circumstances change, PATMA has the ability to adjust our income and expenses through various financial levers.

- Reducing labor costs
- Reducing program expenses
- Requesting additional GoPasses from Caltrain and large employers in the area
- Increasing grant writing and philanthropic fundraising
- Growing our fee-for-TDM planning and program administration business
- Identifying the feasibility of short-term loans

PATMA will continue to operate in a lean manner and make effective use of our budget to maximize impact.

Budget Scenarios for 2023-2024

While PATMA’s FY 2024 budget request is for \$400,000, with a higher level of funding, PATMA could serve more people with transit passes, Lyft late night rides home, and bicycle programs. Consider Figure 11 which provides the return on investment for various levels of funding that will result in a reduction of demand for 266, 366, or 569 parking spaces.

Figure 11: Return on investment for various levels of funding



									
Budget Scenarios	2024-2025 Scenario 1			2024-2025 Scenario 2			2024-2025 Scenario 3		
	Cost per worker	# SOV diverted	Annual cost	Cost per worker	# SOV diverted	Annual cost	Cost per worker	# SOV diverted	Annual cost
<b>Current programs</b>									
SamTrans passes	\$ 787	27	\$ 21,249	\$ 787	50	\$ 39,350	\$ 787	90	\$ 70,830
VTA passes	\$ 1,080	32	\$ 34,560	\$ 1,080	52	\$ 56,160	\$ 1,080	90	\$ 97,200
Dumbarton Express passes	\$ 2,592	6	\$ 15,552	\$ 2,592	12	\$ 31,104	\$ 2,592	25	\$ 64,800
GoPass Donation Program	\$ -	169	\$ -	\$ -	184	\$ -	\$ -	250	\$ -
SamTrans passes (for GoPass holders)	\$ 787	4	\$ 3,148	\$ 787	8	\$ 6,296	\$ 787	20	\$ 15,740
VTA passes (for GoPass holders)	\$ 1,080	10	\$ 10,800	\$ 1,080	22	\$ 23,760	\$ 1,080	30	\$ 32,400
Current annual Lyft usage		4	\$ 10,113		8	\$ 10,113		12	\$ 10,113
Bike Love incentives	\$ 660	10	\$ 6,600	\$ 660	22	\$ 14,520	\$ 660	40	\$ 26,400
Buying refurbished bikes (Bike Exchange) for essential workers	\$ 400	4	\$ 4,000	\$ 400	8	\$ 8,000	\$ 400	12	\$ 12,000
Labor (program management, administration, commute survey) and business costs			\$ 89,978			\$ 177,697			\$ 225,017
<b>New potential programs</b>									
Marketing outreach support			\$ 4,000			\$ 20,000			\$ 30,000
Pass delivery admin support			\$ -			\$ 5,000			\$ 7,500
Bike safety classes (quarterly)			\$ -			\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000
Bike buddy wayfinding support			\$ -			\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000
Reduced demand for parking spaces - every day, all year		266			366			569	
		<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>		<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$ 400,000</b>		<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>
Cost/year to eliminate demand for 1 parking space			\$ 751.88			\$ 1,092.89			\$ 1,054.48

## Conclusion

In support of the local economy, over the next three years PATMA will look for opportunities to continue delivering cost-effective programs for service sector and light office workers that reduce traffic congestion and demand for parking in Palo Alto. PATMA will leverage complementary programs by other agencies such as Caltrain’s GoPass Donation Program, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition’s bike safety training, and VTA’s Guaranteed Ride Home program that enable mode shift to low-carbon commute modes.

Many public and private organizations are working hard to facilitate a future seamless, integrated low-carbon transportation system in the Bay Area that will lower personal transportation costs and reduce GHG emissions. PATMA will continue to monitor developments in these areas in support of local businesses and their employees.



# 2023 COMMUTE SURVEY REPORT

*for*



*and*

## PATMA Board Members

Cedric de la Beaujardiere, resident (Chair)

Rob George, Philz Coffee (Treasurer)

Shannon McEntee, resident (Secretary)

Philip Kamhi, City of Palo Alto

Brad Ehikian, Premiere Properties

Sebastian Mafla, Sheraton

Alejandra Mier, Coupa Cafe

Nathan Duncan, Patagonia

December 2023

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ALTRANS

Alternative Transportation Solutions

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## Executive Summary

In September and October 2023, the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA) team surveyed workers at organizations in the University Avenue Downtown (Downtown) and California Avenue (Cal Ave) areas to learn about their commute habits and preferences. The team conducted online and in-person surveys in English and Spanish through door-to-door canvassing, mass texting, and email follow-up. This document provides the highlights of the survey findings.

The two main objectives of the commute survey were to 1) determine which workers in Downtown and Cal Ave were open to shifting their commute from single occupancy vehicles to mass transit or active mobility options and 2) raise awareness of PATMA programs.

Based on the 738 completed surveys, Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents from the four main sectors in Downtown and on Cal Ave: service, government, technology, and light office.

Figure 1: Survey Respondents by Sector

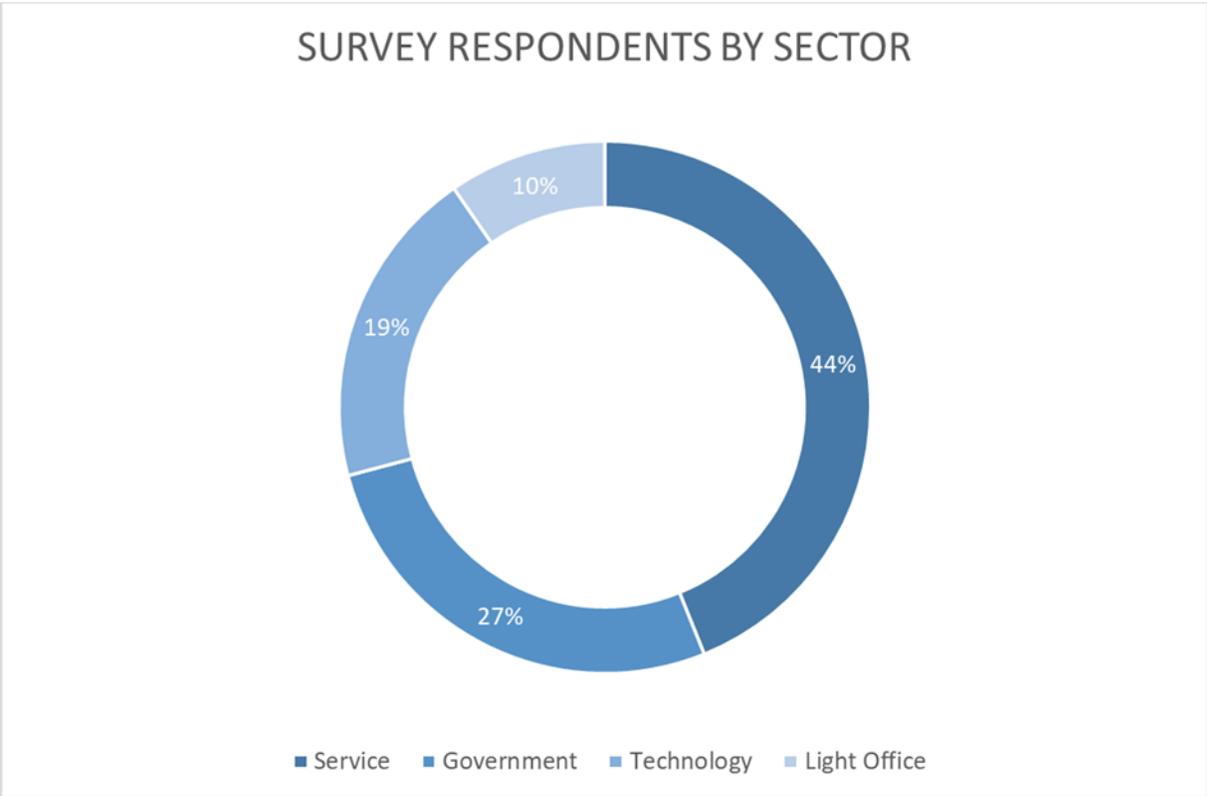
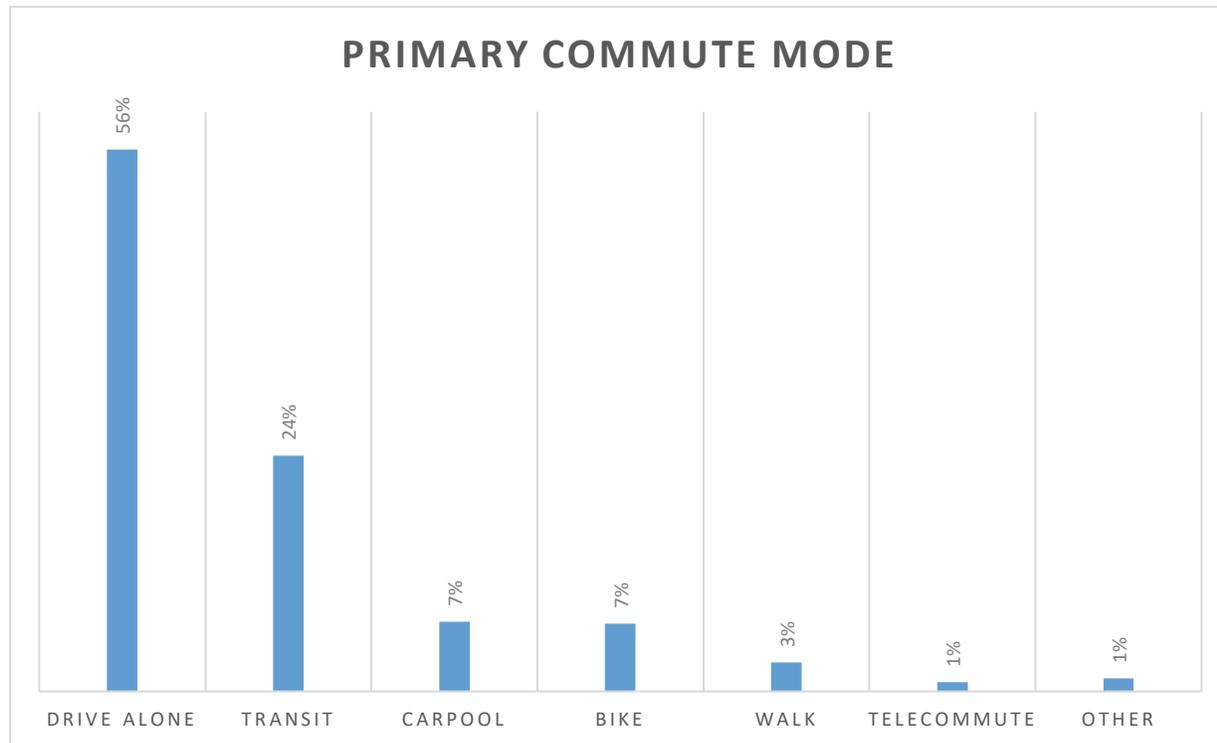


Figure 2 below shows the primary mode workers use to commute each week. A little more than half of the workers who participated in the survey shared that their primary commute mode is a single occupancy vehicle.

Figure 2: Primary Commute Mode of Survey Respondents



Also notably, answers to the survey question “Are there any issues or concerns you would like to share about your commute?” yielded a treasure trove of feedback, insights, and compliments with one respondent sharing that:

*“I use the TMA Caltrain pass and it has been amazing. Plus I get my steps in. I tell everyone I know how great this program is!”*

Most importantly, data collected in the 2023 commute survey illuminates opportunities to reach more workers and expand PATMA program offerings that will help realize the City of Palo Alto’s goals to reduce traffic congestion, reduce demand for parking, support economic recovery, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and address social equity issues.

## Introduction

In 2023, the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (PATMA) conducted their eighth annual employee commute survey as required by the funding agreement between PATMA and the City of Palo Alto (COPA). PATMA contracted with ALTRANS TMA Inc. to conduct the survey in-house and performed outreach in September and October 2023.

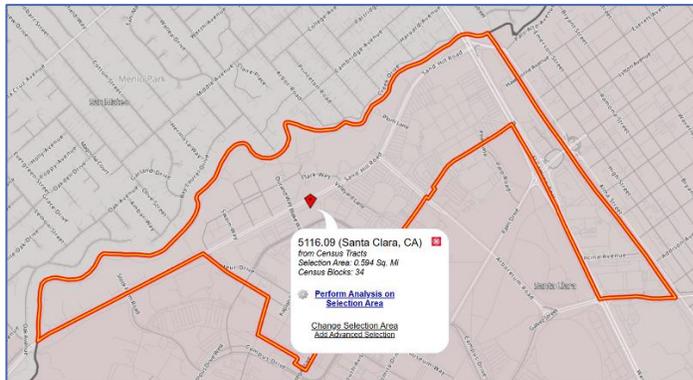
The survey was designed to identify how Palo Alto employees working in the University Avenue Downtown (Downtown) and California Avenue (Cal Ave) areas commute to work, identify individuals currently driving alone who are open to shifting to a sustainable commute mode, and raise awareness of PATMA’s program offerings.

## Survey Population

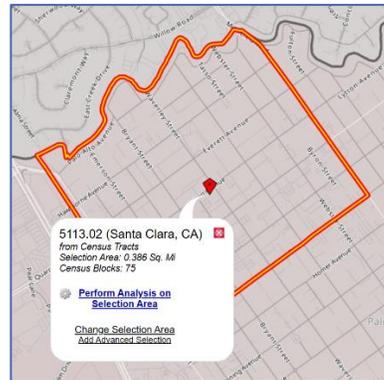
The total worker population for the Downtown and Cal Ave areas, according to the U.S. Census OnTheMap data tool, shows 34,824 workers in three census tracts in Downtown and 5,302 workers in the census tract for the Cal Ave area. Four census tracts referenced are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Census Tracts for Downtown and California Ave Workers

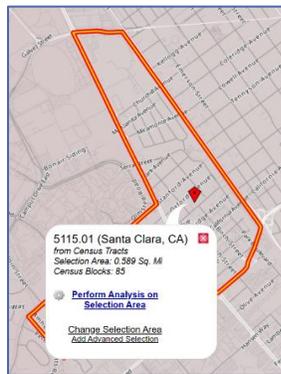
Census Tract 5116.09  
(includes El Camino Real hotels and Sand Hill Rd)



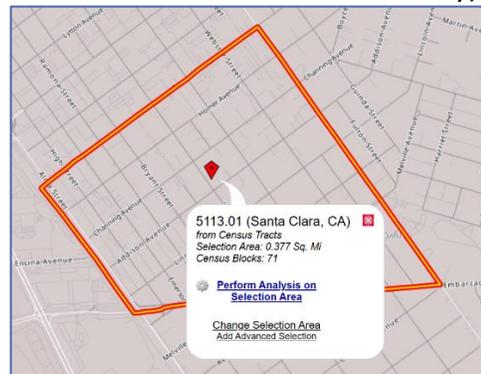
Census Tract 5113.02  
(includes Downtown University Ave)



Census Tract 5115.01  
(includes California Ave and across El Camino Real)



Census Tract 5113.01 (includes Downtown area south of University)



For these four census tract numbers, the 2021 data set<sup>1</sup> for the U.S. Census OnTheMap tool was extracted to determine the number of workers for each North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) category. Figure 4 shows NAICS codes for which there is worker data as well as the corresponding PATMA sector classification category -- service, government, technology and light office.

<sup>1</sup> 2021 data is the most recent available from the U.S. Census OnTheMap database

Figure 4: NAICS Codes and PATMA Classification

NAICS Code	NAICS Sector Name	PATMA Classification
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	Service
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	Service
22	Utilities	Government
23	Construction	Service
31-33	Manufacturing	Service
42	Wholesale Trade	Service
44-45	Retail Trade	Service
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	Service
51	Information	Technology
52	Finance and Insurance	Light Office
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	Light Office
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Technology
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	Light Office
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	Light Office
61	Educational Services	Light Office
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	Service
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	Light Office
72	Accommodation and Food Services	Service
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	Service
92	Public Administration	Government

Source: NAICS Association

The number of workers listed in each census tract were placed into four different employment classifications in Figure 5, which shows the total population of workers for this survey.

Figure 5: Number of Workers in Two Commercial Areas

Area	PATMA Business Category	Count	% Share
Downtown	Service	15,623	45%
	Technology	14,806	43%
	Light Office	3,482	10%
	Government	913	3%
	<b>Total Downtown</b>	<b>34,824</b>	
California Ave	Service	1,992	38%
	Technology	1,592	30%
	Light Office	1,718	32%
	Government	0	0%
	<b>Total Cal Ave</b>	<b>5,302</b>	
	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>40,126</b>	

Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2021 data

From among this total population in these two commercial areas, as of the end of October, the commute survey team had received 831 surveys from workers. After cleaning the survey data of duplicate responses and incomplete surveys, there were a total of 738 complete surveys of which 324 respondents were service sector workers, 199 were government staff, 71 were light office workers, and 144 were tech workers. This year’s response rate was higher than the two previous years the survey was conducted. The response rate for each of the eight survey years is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Number of PATMA Commute Survey Responses by Year

Year	Number of Respondents
2023	738
2022	511
2021	551
2019	1,471
2018	496
2017	892
2016	829
2015	1,173

In 2023, the use of electronic tablets, stronger working relationships with managers, and gentle nudges to organizations that had not yet completed any surveys, as well as a return to office (RTO) in the tech sector helped boost response numbers over the previous year.

### Survey Methodology

In fall 2023, the PATMA team reached out to businesses and organizations to administer the survey. Questions asked about the primary travel mode workers used to commute, their city of residence, employer, income level, openness to sustainable commute options, and interest in commute counseling.

The survey was mainly administered through tablets using the SurveyMonkey platform. The electronic survey version employed skip logic and survey branching to optimize question relevance to different respondents. Paper copies of the surveys in English and Spanish were distributed to managers at downtown hotels who collected responses from their staff. Block-by-block, door-to-door canvassing resulted in a dataset representing businesses and organizations in the Downtown and Cal Ave areas. Door-to-door outreach was bolstered by mass texting and email follow-up to business contacts.

The PATMA team was able to secure 738 responses to the survey out of a Downtown and Cal Ave worker population of 40,126 people. At a 95% confidence interval, and with a sample size at 1.84% of the population, the margin of error for this data is +/- 0.96%.

## Results

Data collected in this survey shed light on several topics:

- how people commute to work
- where they are coming from
- which workers could get to work taking just one transit option running into Downtown or Cal Ave
- which workers are open to a different commute mode, and
- what information, equipment, or incentives could encourage them to make the shift from driving alone.

The following figures show the results for each question.

**Q1.** *In which city and zip code do you live?*

Among survey respondents this year, the top 20 home cities are shown in Figure 7.

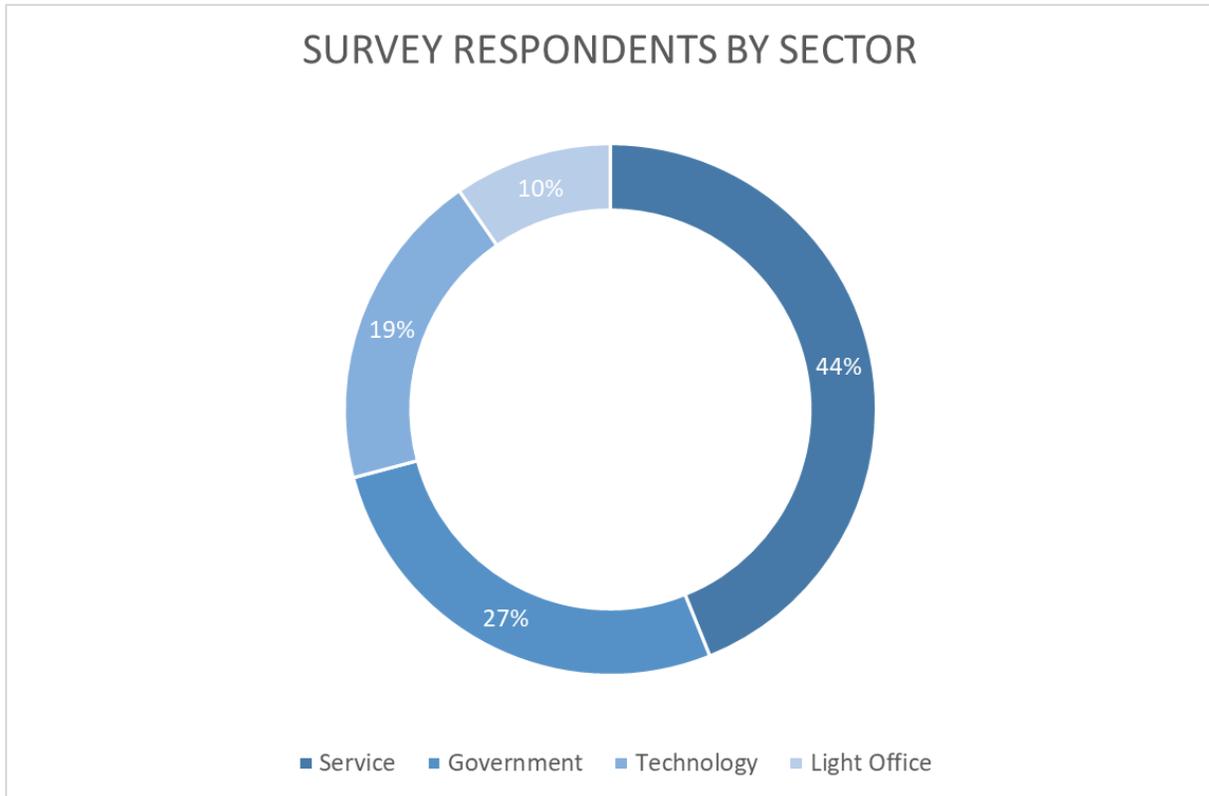
Figure 7: Top 20 Cities of Survey Respondents

Home City	Count	Home City	Count
San Jose	121	Menlo Park	17
Palo Alto	83	Hayward	14
Mountain View	64	San Carlos	14
Redwood City	61	Campbell	9
Sunnyvale	55	Gilroy	9
East Palo Alto	39	Belmont	8
San Francisco	32	Newark	8
Santa Clara	23	Cupertino	7
Fremont	22	Los Altos	7
San Mateo	18	San Ramon	7

Figure 8 maps the zip codes of survey respondents.



Figure 9: Survey Respondents by Sector



Note that the number of survey respondents from the technology sector is higher this year than last. On May 1, 2023, Amazon offices in Downtown required employees to return to office.

**Q3.** *How do you usually travel to work? If you use more than one type of transportation, choose the one used for the longest distance of your trip.*

Many commuters use more than one type of transportation for commuting. To be able to compare this year's data with previous years' data, we asked people about the main commute mode they use for the longest segment of their trip. Figure 10 provides information about the primary commute mode.

Figure 10: Primary Commute Mode

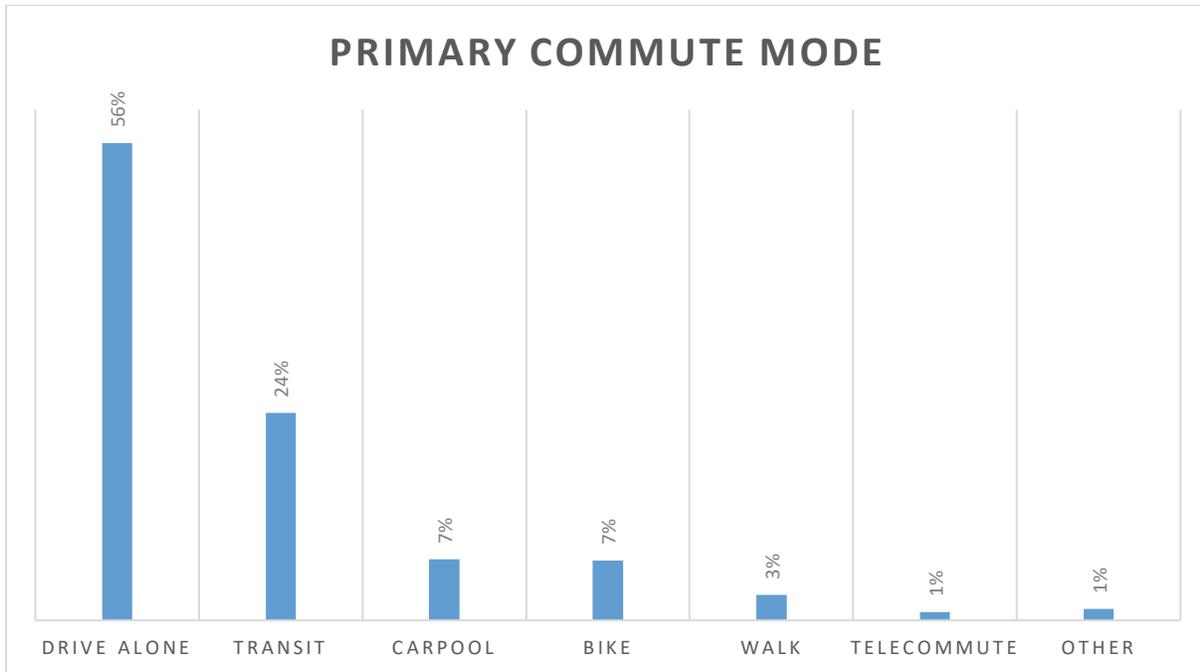
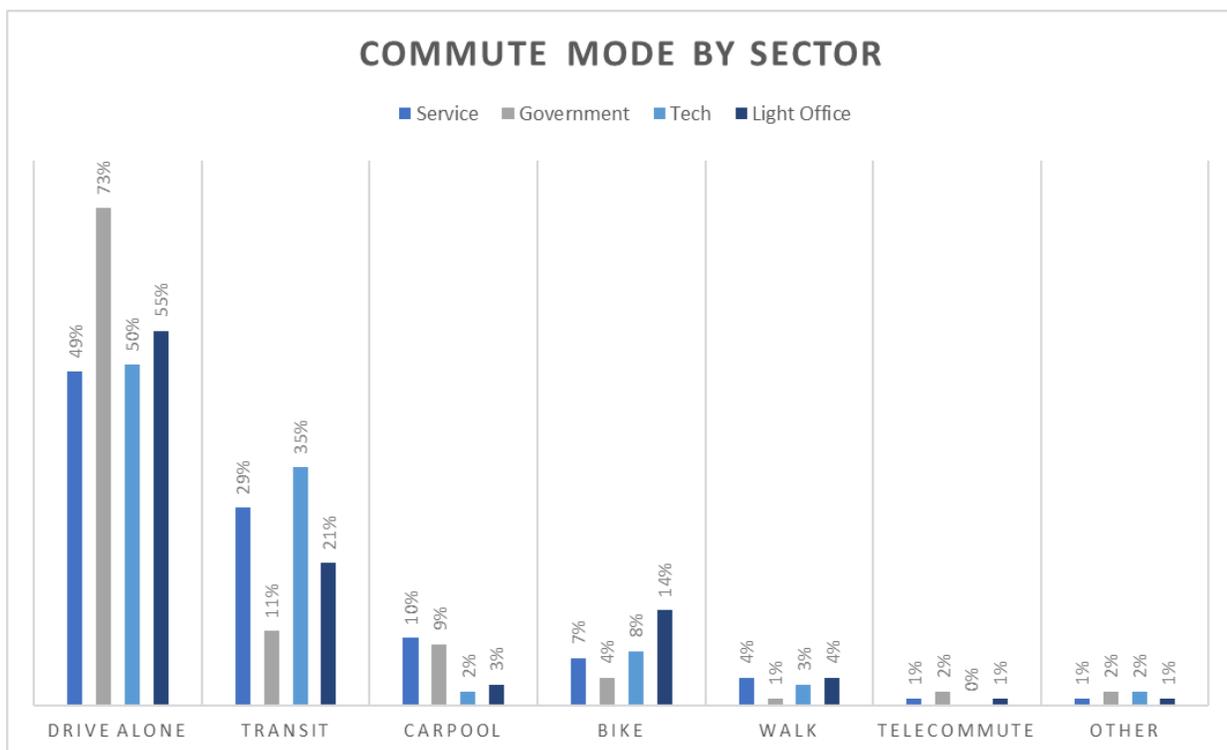


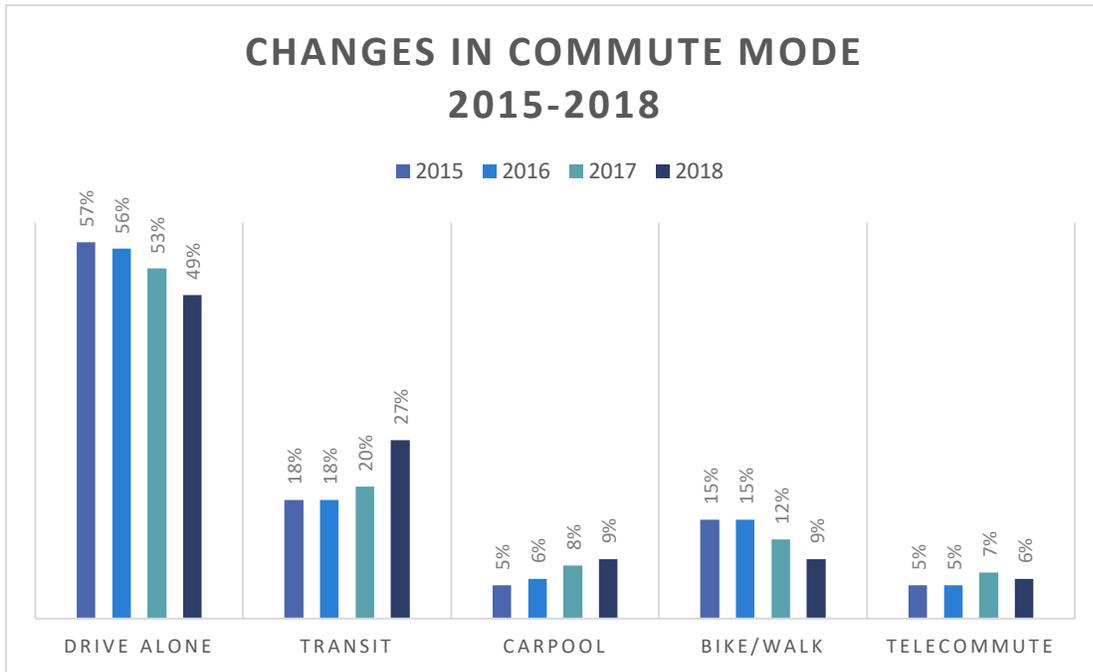
Figure 11 divides this data by sector for 2023 to allow comparisons between government, light office, service, and tech sectors.

Figure 11: Commute Mode by Sector



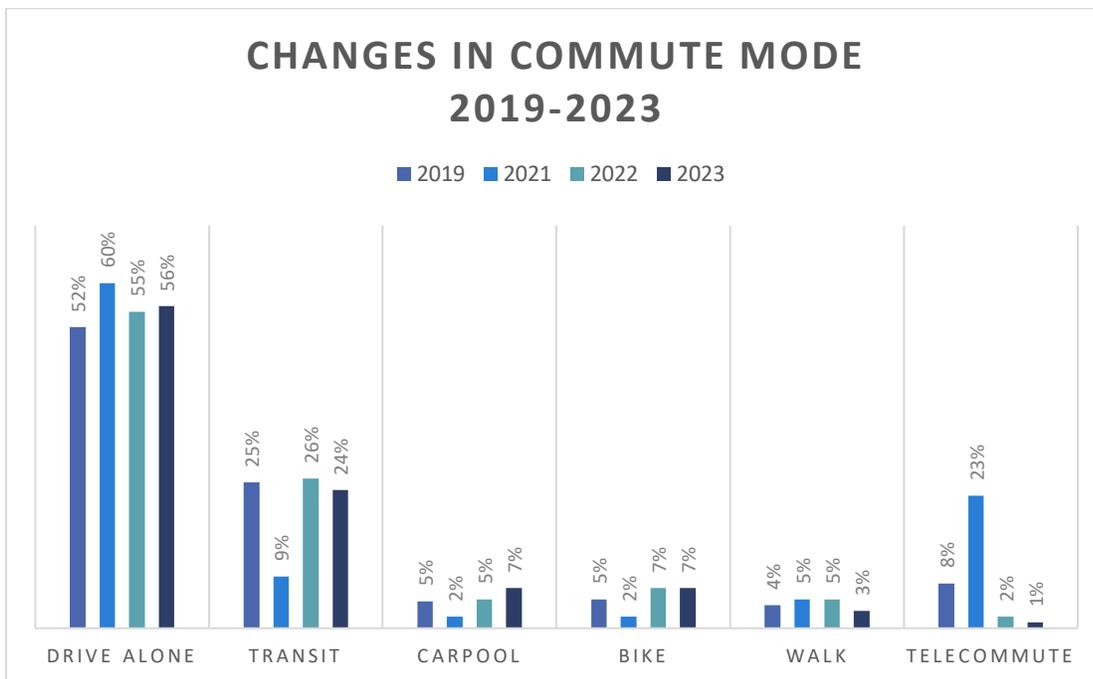
A comparison of commute modes over the past several years is shown in Figures 12 and 13.

Figure 12: Changes in Commute Mode, 2015-2018



Starting in 2019 when PATMA brought the commute survey in-house, data was collected for biking and walking separately.

Figure 13: Changes in Commute Mode, 2019-2023



**Q4. If you drive alone to work, what are your main reasons for doing so? (select up to 3)**

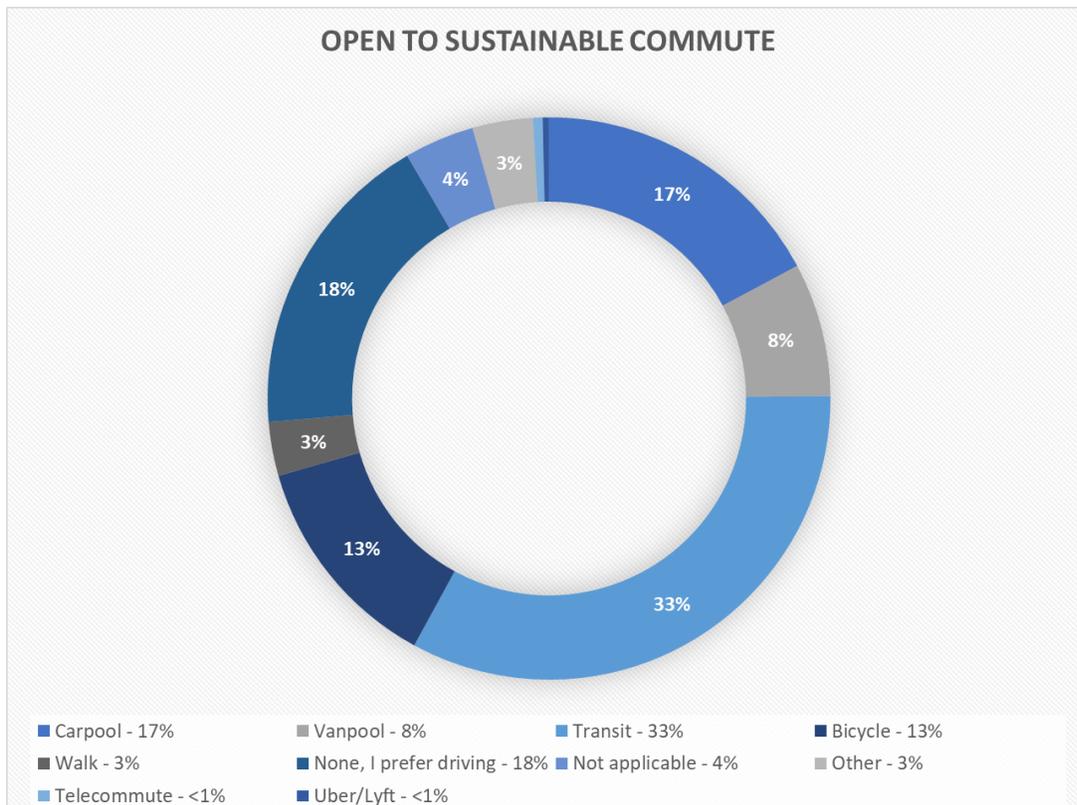
- Live too far from work (177)
- Prefer to drive my own car (118)
- Might need to get home quickly for an emergency (96)
- Work too early or too late to take mass transit (91)
- Need to pick up or drop off children before or after work (70)
- Need my car during work (47)
- Feel alternatives like bicycling are unsafe (37)

Many people find driving their own vehicles more convenient and faster, depending on where they live, or if they have outside obligations before or after work. Yet, many people who drive are open to alternatives.

**Q5. If you drive alone to work, which of the following sustainable commute modes are you open to taking?**

Among workers who identify as single occupancy vehicle drivers, Figure 13 shows that nearly three-quarters are open to a sustainable commute mode of carpooling, vanpooling, mass transit, bicycling, or walking.

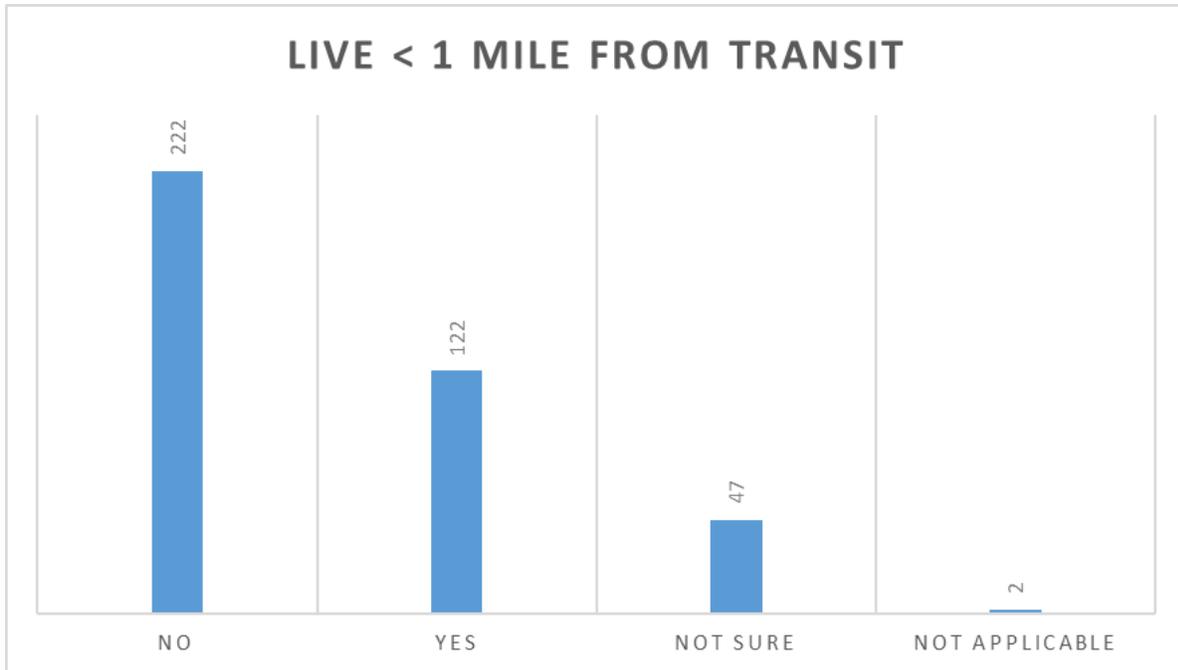
Figure 13: Single Occupancy Vehicle Drivers Open to a Sustainable Commute



**Q6.** *If you drive alone to work, is your home located less than one mile from a Caltrain station, VTA 22/522 bus stop, SamTrans ECR bus stop, or Dumbarton Express bus stop?*

Survey respondents who drive to work but who live a walkable distance from a major mass transit option into Downtown Palo Alto may find it easier to take transit than those who do not. Figure 14 depicts respondents who live near transit.

Figure 14: Single Occupancy Vehicle Drivers Who Live Less than 1 Mile from Transit

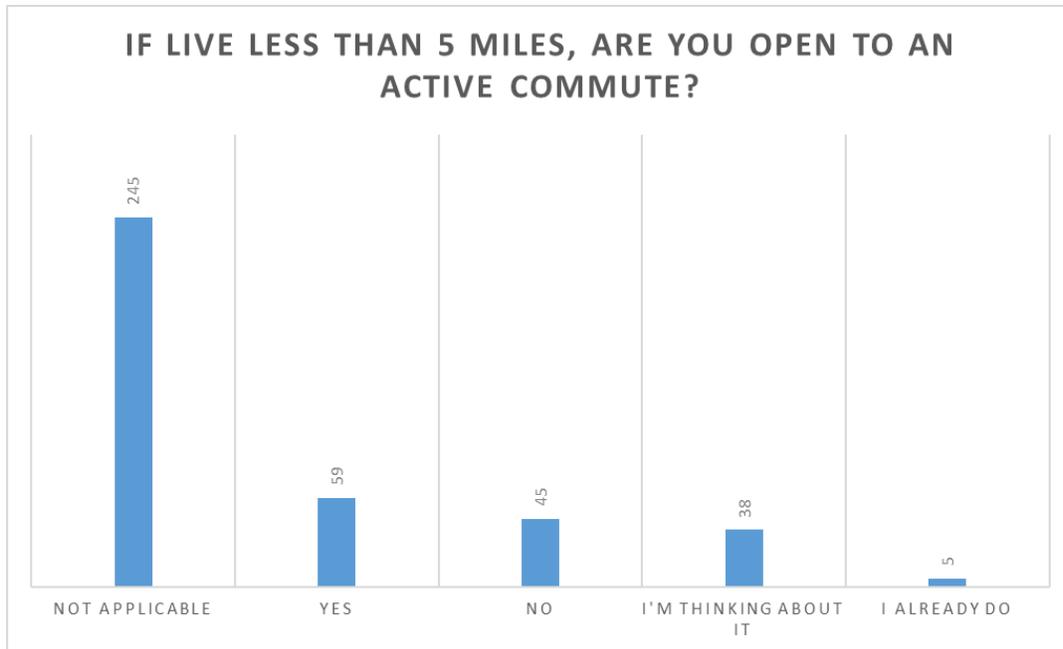


Among those who drive alone to work, 122 report that they live less than one mile from a transit option that runs to Palo Alto, which is 16.5% of survey respondents.

**Q7.** *If you live less than 5 miles from work, are you open to switching to an active mobility mode (bicycle, electric bicycle, scooter, or electric scooter) for commuting?*

Bicycles, electric bicycles, scooters, and electric scooters offer active commutes for workers who live in nearby cities. The following number of people may be open to an active commute.

Figure 15: Workers Who Live Nearby and Are Open to an Active Commute

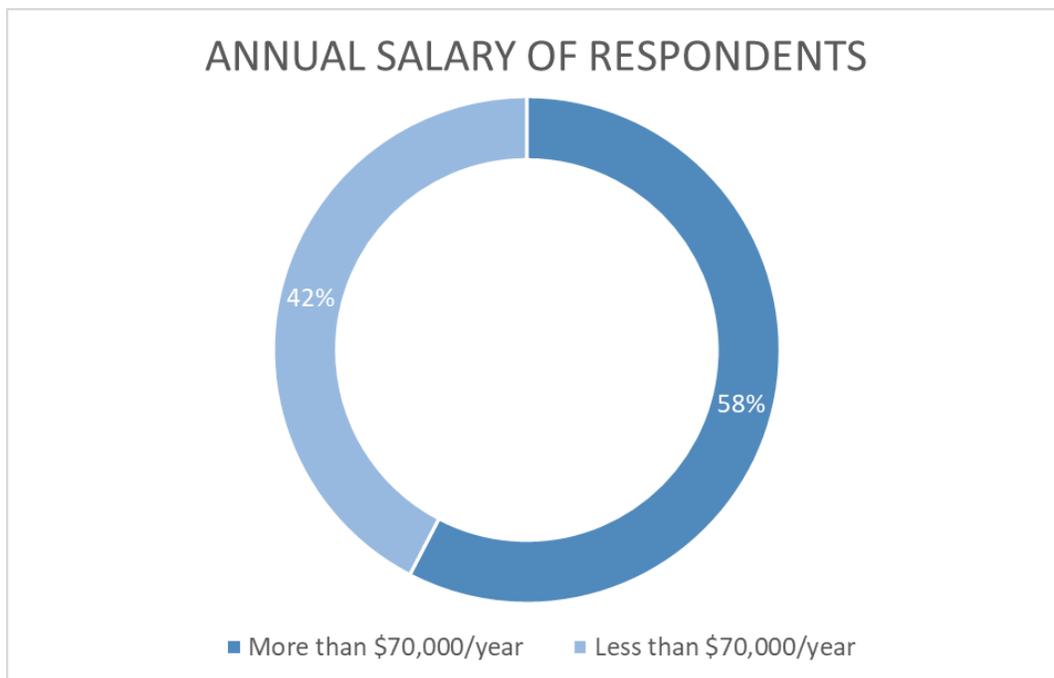


Among the 738 survey respondents, 59 people or 8% live less than five miles from work and are open to an active commute.

**Q8. What is your annual salary?**

The threshold for participation in PATMA's free transit pass program is \$70,000. Figure 16 shows that more than half of respondents make less than \$70,000.

Figure 16: Respondents' Annual Salary



**Q9.** *PATMA staff is available to share information about sustainable commute options that may benefit you. Would you like information about trains, buses, shared Lyft rides, Palo Alto Link, or bicycling incentives?*

In the survey, 305 respondents, or 42%, answered “yes.”

**Q10.** *Are there any issues or concerns you would like to share about your commute?*

Question 10 gave respondents an opportunity to share insights and feedback related to their commute.

Major themes in the hundreds of responses include:

- Traffic seems as bad as it was pre-pandemic.
- With the Return to Office, some workers are commuting to the office a few days/week even though they feel they can effectively do their work from home.
- For people driving to work, the cost of gas and bridge tolls as well as parking issues are challenging.
- Many workers have concerns about the reliability and timeliness of trains and buses.
- Some workers shared concerns about wait times between trains and buses from different mass transit agencies.
- Some requested more weekend and early morning bus service.
- Some workers requested faster and more direct sustainable transportation options from the East Bay (Fremont and Hayward), North San Jose, and south of the San Jose Diridon Caltrain station including from Los Banos.
- Several people expressed a wish that they could afford to live closer to Palo Alto in order to take sustainable commute options to work.
- Respondents who are ineligible for free transit passes expressed concern about the expense of transit.
- A few people mentioned concerns about personal safety at the Downtown transit center and concern about bike theft on the train.

Among respondents who are happy with the free transit pass program, their comments included:

- I use the TMA Caltrain pass and it has been amazing. Plus I get my steps in. I tell everyone I know how great this program is!
- I use the bus in the morning to get to the train. I walk to the bus from my home. I like riding the bus and train because of the interesting people I meet. One time I left my wallet on the train and they called me to let me know they had my wallet. Good people.
- No issues. I really enjoy that we have the opportunity to receive free bus passes. It really helps out a lot.
- I like taking Caltrain because it goes closer to where I need to go compared to the bus.
- I love taking Caltrain!

- So thankful for the Caltrain pass.

Through the commute survey a dozen respondents requested better bicycling infrastructure:

- More bike lanes :)
- I wish we had wider bike paths on all our main roads.
- No bike lane on Alma overpass of University. No bike lanes on Alma south of University. Poor bike path signage on Embarcadero Bike Path from Caltrain south platform to across University to El Walk Fields path or Palm Drive/Stanford University path.
- Cycling can be quite dangerous at times. Lytton Ave has a bike lane but only for part of the journey. Crossing Middlefield can be a little dangerous.
- Bikes being ridden on the sidewalks is a problem, and driverless cars are unnerving.
- Middlefield Road, south of Willow Rd, has no dedicated bicycle lane. Can the lane markings be moved so there is a dedicated bicycle lane, at least from University Ave, north to Willow?
- Southgate Neighborhood streets (including the bike boulevard) are too narrow for a car and a bike to pass head-on when cars are parked on both sides. This is a hazard for emergency vehicles too. I recommend red curb (no parking) be added on one side of these Southgate neighborhood streets.
- I live and work very close to the freeway so driving is a far easier option for me than using transit. I'd love to bike to work someday when my kids are older and more independent.
- Bike safety. Palo Alto is nice and safe for bikers, but riding through other cities (e.g. Redwood City) is not great due to road conditions and traffic.
- Bike lanes are not well maintained.
- Bicycles do not follow the rules of the road. They do not stop at stop signs.
- At work we need bike parking and charging outlet for e-bikes, and bike equipment lockers.

## Key Insights

- The changes in commute mode between 2022 and 2023 were not as dramatic as the changes from 2021 to 2022.
- With a return to office (RTO) in 2023, there are fewer people telecommuting full-time and more people coming into the office for at least part of the week.
- The pandemic altered traffic volume and patterns but now traffic congestion is perceived to have increased to near pre-pandemic levels.
- Mass transit ridership continues to grow although many riders have concerns about the frequency and reliability of service as well as connectivity between different buses and trains.
- Many workers live near transit options and are open to taking transit.

- People who live in the East Bay, North San Jose, and points south would like better mass transit options.
- There appears to be interest in active mobility commuting but also concerns about bike safety on the roads.
- Many people who live within five miles of work are open to an active commute.

## Conclusions

Given the openness of respondents to sustainable commute modes and the proximity of their homes to either transit options or their workplace, survey results point to opportunities to mode shift more workers who commute to Palo Alto by providing information, equipment, and rewards. Some people would benefit from more availability of bikes, electric bikes, and electric scooters for commutes of less than five miles. Others just need information about real time train and bus arrivals, Guaranteed Ride Home availability, rapid bus schedules and routes, and safer bicycle routes between home and work. And finally, any incentives or rewards, such as Bike Love rewards, would provide an additional nudge toward a more sustainable commute.