

UNDERCOVER

ALTRANS' shuttle monitoring service ensures safety, passenger satisfaction and program success, in South San Francisco and beyond.

**BY DANIEL OLIVER
ACCOUNT MANAGER, ALTRANS**

Bay Area cities have begun to develop creative solutions to boost mobility and alleviate traffic congestion in recent years, including a number of free community shuttle programs.

Community shuttles improve accessibility for those without vehicle access, and create incentives for drivers to consider transit use.

Shuttle routes are more easily adapted to passenger needs than larger transit infrastructure, and coordinated stops increase the convenience of transit use.

Measuring success and identifying barriers to improvement is vital when developing these pilot programs. For this reason in addition to its shuttle planning and operations services, in 2016 ALTRANS launched a new Shuttle Monitoring service.

Leveraging decades of experience in the shuttle business, ALTRANS identifies strengths and weaknesses of the client's program and makes recommendations to ensure sustainable growth and success.

In order to gain insight from the passenger's perspective, ALTRANS deploys an anonymous observer, or "Secret Shopper," to anonymously ride the shuttle, noting punctuality, driver and vehicle safety, and customer service.

"The goal of this service is to improve the overall shuttle safety conditions for as many shuttle providers as we can, thereby improving the shuttle quality, passenger experience, and ridership" explains Stephen Blaylock, President, ALTRANS.

By working alongside program managers, providers and operators to ensure the highest quality of service, ALTRANS hopes to not only improve each individual program, but the overall shuttle transportation landscape in the Bay Area.

An early client of this service, the City of South San Francisco, hired ALTRANS to analyze and consult on its free community shuttle program, known locally as the South City Shuttle.

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**JUSTIN LOVELL
PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATOR,
CITY OF SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO**

Launched in 2014, [the South City Shuttle](#) operates on weekdays and provides trips to local stores, schools, community centers, and medical facilities in South San Francisco. Connections are available to BART and SamTrans. Shuttles are free to the general public.

Each month, ALTRANS sends a Secret Shopper to ride the shuttle and audit the service. The observer takes notes, photographs, ridership counts, occasionally



"Free South City Shuttle"
Source: [City of South San Francisco](#)

asking passengers for feedback. Reports and analyses are then shared with the Program Managers at the City of South San Francisco.

City administrators report positive results from the program. Justin Lovell, a Public Works Administrator with the City of South San Francisco, says that gaining an outside perspective from ALTRANS Secret Shoppers enhances the program's overall performance.

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ALTRANS will continue its work with the City of South San Francisco in 2018 to further develop the South City Shuttle program, ensuring long-term success and community satisfaction.

ALTRANS plans to expand this important service to additional clients in 2018 and beyond.

For more information about ALTRANS' Shuttle Monitoring service, please contact Daniel Oliver: tdm@altrans.net.