

HTA & HCAOG & GRANT PARTNERS

Humboldt Partnering Assets & Authorities for Comprehensive Transit (PAACT)

This describes the purpose, content, and recommended participants for the upcoming April events with consultants from Jarrett Walker & Associates:

- Stakeholder Workshop scheduled for 1pm to 4pm on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. Location TBA.
- Core Design Retreat scheduled for April 29 & 30, 2026. Location TBA.



April 28 (Tue.), 1pm – 4pm
Stakeholder Workshop

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

We begin the stakeholder workshop with a simple “planning game” in which participants can play with the basic building blocks of transit. We use pieces of colored waxed string to represent lines and frequencies. Each group is given a finite quantity of string, representing a limited budget, so they discover for themselves how far this resource will go. This forces them to make choices that reveal their priorities. They discover some basic facts and trade-offs, so that when they assess a real-world transit proposal, they can grasp why certain choices had to be made.

At the end of the game, we post the results of each table’s work and lead a discussion about how these networks are similar or different, and how they would be better or worse at different goals. Most of what we need the stakeholders to understand arises out of this process, which means we don’t have to lecture as much. We want people to know and remember the facts because they make intuitive sense, not because we told them so.



After the game, we will provide a summary of the “Choices” facing HTA to provide adequate service to all jurisdictions that participate of the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). This will give stakeholders an understanding of how HTA’s bus network is performing on different key measures and the key choices before them for the region.

We use anonymous, real-time polling to facilitate discussions about the transit networks designed in these exercises, and then about more pointed choices for the HTA bus network. Real-time polling helps stakeholders understand how their individual opinions relate to others. People who are normally loud and dominant at meetings sometimes find that their opinion is in the minority. People who are quiet have equal influence. Real-time polling can illuminate disagreements that warrant further discussion, but also often reveals surprising agreement among people accustomed to being on opposite sides in transit debates.

DRAFT AGENDA

Below is a typical agenda for the workshop.

Timing	Agenda Item
1:00 – 1:10 pm	Welcome and opening remarks
1:10 – 1:30 pm	Planning game instructions / formation of work groups
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Planning Exercise / Transit Network Design Game <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work groups discussion and brainstorming• Work groups develop their proposals
2:30 – 2:45 pm	BREAK
2:45 – 3:15 pm	Debrief and discussion of gameboard results
3:15 – 3:45 pm	Existing Conditions and “Choices” Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing service and performance review• Key policy decisions “Choices”
3:45 – 3:55 pm	Polling on “Choices”
3:55 – 4:00 pm	Thank you and Next Steps

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE AND WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Stakeholder Workshop participants can be civic leaders themselves (such as City Councilors or County Commissioners), if they choose to participate, or trusted associates that they designate. They can also be community leaders identified by the planning team. *They should be selected with the goal that their consensus indicates a high likelihood of widespread support in the community.*

Each participant should understand that they have a responsibility to participate in the process and to engage with their own constituents in building understanding of it. We would ask them to commit more time and attention than simply taking a survey or dropping into an event. In exchange for their investment of time and their training, we would treat their input with added weight and expect them to reflect the planning process back to members of their groups.

It is essential to engage these civic leaders as a group because public engagement isn't just about staff or consultants hearing what stakeholders say. It is essential that stakeholders also *hear one another* and have the experience of thinking together about a challenge.

If stakeholders hear one another's input directly, they learn which of their demands are in conflict and competition with demands from others. We can invite them to participate in the difficult work of reconciling, compromising, and making the tough decisions that lead to a realistic, implementable plan. Having given their input as a group, they will better understand, at the end of the process, why the final plan is what it is.

Core Design Retreat

PURPOSE AND GOAL

This Retreat is designed to do two things at once:

- Develop network design ideas, within an operating cost limit, that are better than any planner could have designed alone, and
- Ensure that a range of key staff understand the thought process that led to the Draft Network Concepts because they were part of it themselves.

By the end of the Retreat, we should have designed *where and how often* HTA buses would run in two network concepts. These two concepts would show what the HTA network might look if it focused on different goals – ridership and coverage. The parameters of the concepts could still change based on the preferences of HTA staff and direction from the Board or Project Steering Working Group.

The network concepts we draw together in this Retreat will be refined, mapped and analyzed over the following two months, and then presented to the public before summer, in July and August of 2026.

TWO LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION (FULL RETREAT OR CHECK-INS)

The work of the retreat happens mostly in intensive work sessions that take most of our time and for which participants must be continuously available. Obviously, many people who are interested and have useful contributions to offer will not be able to commit to this, so each day of the Retreat includes a “4 pm check-in”.

* At 4 pm each day, a larger set of staff will be invited to join us in the Retreat room to see the work in progress, receive a short briefing on it, and offer comments. The 4 pm check-in is recommended for senior and executive staff but is the appropriate level of participation for anyone else who should be involved but cannot commit the time to the full retreat. Full retreat members who do not want to be there for the 4 pm discussion are free to leave at this time, and this provides each member with an hour each day for catching up on other business.

It is very disruptive for participants to enter & leave the retreat process at times other than 4 pm. The retreat has no specific agenda that indicates when we will discuss any particular topic, because the facilitator must have the flexibility to spend more or less time on each issue based on how the conversation flows. We therefore ask that participants either commit to the full retreat or attend only the 4 pm check-ins as available.

From here on, the word *participant*, unless otherwise noted, refers to someone who has committed to attend the full retreat.

PARTICIPANTS

The total number of participants for the full retreat is ideally no more than 15: two from the consulting team and the rest from HTA and other key project partners. ***Each (full) participant must agree to be available in a “retreat” format, and to be unavailable for interruption by other business, during the two retreat days.*** (Staff who wish to be involved but cannot commit are welcome to attend the “4 pm check-ins” described above). In general, participants should be the most senior person from each relevant department who can make that commitment.

Consulting Team senior staff:

- Manuel Soto, Facilitator and Lead Planner
- Shreya Jain, Lead Analyst

The most senior available HTA or City, County, RTPA, or DOT staff representing the following functions:

- Transit/Transportation Planning (essential)
- Operations Planning (essential)
- Scheduling (recommended)
- Information and marketing (recommended)
- Land use integration (recommended)
- Other functions judged important by HTA and HCAOG staff

In addition, it may be appropriate to invite staff from key partner jurisdictions who have the interest and time, especially if buy-in from these partners is critical and the issue of transit is central to their work. In general, we’d strongly recommend inviting the largest and most transit-friendly cities to the full day sessions. Smaller cities can attend the 4pm check-ins. Regional or state traffic engineers, transportation policy leads, and land use planners are good candidates for the full retreat.

**Note: Project Steering Working Group members (grant partners) are expected to be full participants, as possible.*

EXPECTATIONS

- ***All conversations during the retreat are “off the record.”*** To ensure an open conversation, all participants must feel empowered to express their ideas, even when those are not yet fully formed or fool-proof. Please avoid detailed discussions with non-participants about the ideas shared during this Retreat until the scenarios discussed are released for public comment. Whenever discussing the Retreat with someone who wasn’t there, focus on the ideas and arguments presented, not on who said them.

- *Historical data may sometimes be useful, but history in itself is not a reason to recommend or oppose anything.* We are developing a plan for today and for the future.
- *Everyone is expected to share ideas and be ready for discussion* and critique of those ideas. Robust discussion is essential.
- *We are critiquing ideas, not people.* Don't get so attached to your idea that you're offended if it isn't used. Keep the ideas flowing.
- We are all representing different knowledge and experience that it's our obligation to share.
- Consensus is ideal but if there is a controversial decision to be made and some are strongly opposed, all points of view are aired and then a decision will be made about what will go forward in each scenario.
- In designing the alternatives, we may design routes that look a lot like existing services, but only if it's the best way to achieve the goals of that particular scenario.
- *Please stay off your phones, email and regular duties during work sessions.* We will provide breaks.

RETREAT TIMING AND SCHEDULE

Sessions: Sessions will run from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm on each workday over the full two days of the retreat, scheduled for April 29-30, 2026. During the full-day sessions, 10 to 15 minutes breaks will be provided every 90 minutes to provide participants the opportunity to relax, stretch, catch up on e-mail, or have any necessary side conversations. A longer break will be provided for lunch in the middle of the day. Lunch and refreshments will be provided both days.

Check-ins: Each day's work session will be followed by a 4:00 pm briefing intended for other HTA and City or County staff to participate, as well as regional partners, other local agency executives, Board Directors and/or elected officials. Participants may stay for this briefing but are not required to. These briefings give officials who may not have time to participate in the full discussion an opportunity to see where the work is going, to ask questions, and to provide input that we may incorporate on the next working day.

ANTICIPATED DAILY SCHEDULE

The times below are a typical daily schedule for a Core Design workshop. Exact timing of any of these events can be adjusted based on the requirements of the venue or other considerations.

- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – Morning work session 1
- 10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. – Morning break.
- 10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. – Morning work session 2
- 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. – Lunch (on or off-site TBD)
- 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. – Afternoon work session 1
- 2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. – Afternoon break.
- 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Afternoon work session 2
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Check-in meeting with non-participant staff.

Manuel Soto

Principal Associate

Manuel is a transit operations and mobility specialist with 25 years of experience in design of transit networks, operations analysis, and strategic planning. He has assisted public transit agencies across the country with planning and implementation of bus rapid transit, commuter express bus, and arterial fixed-route services. Additionally, he has supported clients with implementation of local circulation shuttles, demand response, and microtransit services.

Manuel has wide ranging expertise managing service planning projects, evaluating service delivery models, and benchmarking performance, including the appraisal of in-house versus outsourcing of operations, and impact-benefit of service changes. He translates strategic thinking into actions and plans that deliver ridership and improvements in service.

Aside from transit, Manuel has conducted successful transportation demand management (TDM) programs with large employers, including Fortune 500 corporations, federal agencies, medical centers and universities; promoting use of alternative transportation modes, effecting changes in travel behavior, and reducing parking demand and vehicle miles travelled (VMT).

Transit Network Plans

Manuel has managed dozens of transit network redesigns, working with large urban networks such as Los Angeles Metro, mid-size systems like New Orleans RTA, and small systems such as Clallam Transit. He has worked collaboratively with agency staff and community representatives to assess mobility needs and redesign networks to improve equity, access to jobs, and operational efficiency.

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| □ New Orleans, Louisiana (2011–2012) | □ Yucca Valley, California (2024–2025) |
| □ Port Angeles, Washington (2020–2021) | □ Imperial Valley, California (2025–2026) |
| □ Mankato, Minnesota (2023–2024) | □ Coachella Valley, California (2025–2026) |

Transit Service Implementation

Manuel has supported public and private clients with implementation of service, evaluating in-house vs. outsourcing of operations, leading selection and procurement of vehicles, and guiding implementation of technology systems for fare collection, vehicle location tracking, and passenger counting. Service implementations have included bus rapid transit, commuter express, intercity, shuttle, demand response, and microtransit services. Throughout, Manuel has led coordination among regional agencies, local operators, city public works departments, and community partners.



Education

Master of Arts—Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles
2001

Urban Economics—Diploma, Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago
1995

Architecture—Degree, Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago
1992

Positions Held

2024–present
Principal Associate, Jarrett Walker + Associates (Seattle, WA)

2022–2024
Principal Planner, Toole Design Group (Seattle, WA)

2017–2022
Senior Consultant, Walker Parking Consultants (Seattle, WA)

2015–2017
Director of Planning, MTR Western (Seattle, WA)

Manuel Soto

Principal Associate

Transit Service Implementation Experience

- Metro Rapid Bus Program, Los Angeles (2001–2006)
- Microsoft's Connector Bus Program, Seattle (2007–2016)
- Seattle Children's Hospital (2009–2015)
- Columbia Gorge Express, Oregon (2016–2017)
- Fresno County Rural Microtransit, California (2018–2020)
- Monmouth-Independence Trolley, Oregon (2021–2025)

Bus Rapid Transit and Corridor Planning

Manuel's work in transit network redesigns has led to detailed corridor studies and BRT planning and operational analysis, including analysis of demand, station design and placement, walking and bike access, transit priority measures, running time estimates, vehicle selection, and costs.

- Sepulveda Blvd BRT, Los Angeles (2002–2003)
- I-355 Corridor BRT, Chicago (2010–2011)
- Duke Street BRT, Alexandria (2022–2023)
- Broadway BRT, Louisville (2024–2025)

Shuttle and First/Last Mile Service Planning

Manuel has led many shuttle-service planning and redesign projects for public transit agencies, downtown districts, medical centers, higher-education institutions, and Fortune 500 corporations such as Amazon, Boeing, Microsoft, and Nike. In doing so, he redesigned services to increase access to regional transit hubs, commuter rail and subway stations, and remote parking, but mostly to provide better circulation and mobility within campus areas and communities lacking direct access to transit.

- Downtown Chicago Rush Hour Shuttles (2005)
- Los Angeles DOT Community DASH (2006–2007)
- Nike Corporation, Beaverton (2015)
- Emory University Shuttles, Atlanta (2020)

Campus Mobility Planning

Manuel has led several campus mobility strategies, working with medical centers, university campuses, and large private corporations to reduce drive-alone commuting and parking demand, and increase use of active transportation modes. Including strategies such as reducing centrally located parking, daily pricing of parking, subsidy of transit passes and bike-sharing options, and development of new bicycle infrastructure (secured parking and protected bike lanes) and safe and comfortable walking routes.

- California-Pacific Medical Center, San Francisco (2014–2018)
- Tacoma General Hospital, Tacoma (2018–2020)
- University of Iowa, Iowa City (2019–2020)
- Texas A&M University, College Station (2020–2021)
- Clemson University, Clemson (2020–2021)
- Whole Foods Market Global Office, Austin (2019–2020)

Shreya Jain

Senior Associate

Shreya Jain is a transit planner and data analyst at Jarrett Walker + Associates. Through her work on municipal planning, programs and infrastructure at the City of Portland, as well as her educational background, Shreya has developed broad skills in stakeholder engagement, plan development, data analysis, mapping and visual communication.



Transit Network Planning + Analysis

Shreya has contributed to service planning, mapping, analysis, cost estimates, and public involvement efforts on several projects, including the following:

- **Des Moines, IA**, Reimagine DART Network Plan (Lead Analyst)
- **Canby, OR**, Transit Master Plan (Lead Analyst)
- **Solano County, CA** SolTrans Comprehensive Operational Analysis (Lead Analyst)
- **Portland, OR**, TriMet Forward Together Long Range Plan
- **South Bend, IN**, Connect Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis
- **Albuquerque, NM**, ABQ RIDE Forward Network Plan
- **Greensboro, NC**, GoBORO Long Range Transit Plan

Cartography + Design

Shreya has contributed cartography and graphic design services for JWA projects including:

- **Portland, OR**, TriMet Forward Together Long Range Plan: Shreya worked on mapping efforts involving a significant expansion and redesign of service for TriMet.
- **Santa Cruz, CA** Reimagine METRO: Shreya supported the development of public-facing transit network maps and individual route maps for METRO's bus rider's guide.
- **Wilsonville, OR** SMART Transit Master Plan: Shreya led the development of planning maps and public-facing transit maps for this project.

Education

Master of Urban & Regional Planning, Portland State University, 2020

Bachelor of Science, Environmental Science, Portland State University, 2017

Positions Held

2022–present
Senior Associate, Jarrett Walker + Associates (Portland, OR)

2021–2022
Associate, Kearns & West (Portland, OR)

2019–2021
Planning Assistant, Portland Bureau of Transportation (Oregon)