

2022 APTA AdWheel Awards

Best Marketing and Communications to Support Ridership

2C Special Event

Elk Grove Transit Ride-A-Long to Promote RydeFreeRT





Target Audience

Our primary target audience for the Elk Grove Transit Ride-A-Long was all parents and students (grades TK through 12th) living and/or going to school in the City of Elk Grove.

Situation/Challenge

School districts across the country are struggling to provide affordable, reliable, and convenient student transportation. SacRT has been offering students/youth within our service area fare-free transit services since October 2019, the launch of the RydeFreeRT program. RydeFreeRT has increased youth transit ridership, improved student attendance and reduced absenteeism, and provided more access to non-school related travel. SacRT annexed Elk Grove transit services into its system on July 1, 2021. Part of the annexation agreement included adding Elk Grove students in grades TK through 12th in SacRT's RydeFreeRT fare-free for youth program. However, we needed to make sure Elk Grove parents and students were aware of the newly extended fare-free program, and how it worked.

Strategy/Objective

The strategy was to attract local media by offering a ride-a-long opportunity on one of our Elk Grove bus routes with the Elk Grove mayor, Elk Grove Unified School District Superintendent and Elk Grove School Board Member with the objective of broadly promoting the RydeFreeRT program to raise awareness with Elk Grove parents and students. We distributed a media advisory to invite local media on the ride-a-long, where they rode an in-service bus making stops to pick up students on the way to school. We took photos and videos of the ride-a-long and distributed a press release after, sharing the event on social media channels. For media that couldn't attend the ride-a-long, we shared a DropBox link in the press release with b-roll video, testimonials and photos.

Results/Impact

As a result of the ride-a-long event in August 2021, we received over 10 broadcast and online news stories about the Elk Grove RydeFreeRT fare-free for students/youth program. Broadcast stories reached an audience of 152,284. We posted about the ride-a-long on social media and as a result, received 5,301 impressions on Twitter, with 116 engagements and 17 profile visits. On Facebook, we reached 6,600 people, engaged with 525 and the post was shared 32 times. For all three social media channels, we had 12,161 impressions. Prior to the ride-a-long, student ridership was about 2,700 a month. After the event, student ridership grew to 7,792 in September 2021, and by October 2021 it was 10,286. In just two months, student ridership in Elk Grove outpaced pre-pandemic levels.

Why Submit

The program has been a game-changer to increase transit access to riders in our new service area and historically under-resourced communities. Although our ridership numbers had been typically flat during the pandemic, we have seen student ridership rise, especially after schools reopened to in-person learning. In September 2021, student ridership in Elk Grove accounted for 37.1% of ridership and in October 2021 it accounted for 42.5% of ridership. The ride-a-long event was a fun and innovative example of how to reach a broad audience to support SacRT's objective of quickly raising awareness of the RydeFreeRT program. Students are future transit riders and fare-free transit programs are a great opportunity to start lifetime advocacy early.



Media Advisory and Press Release



FOR PLANNING PURPOSES
August 24, 2021

Ride-A-Long on Elk Grove Transit to Promote Free Rides for Students SacRT's RydeFreeRT program now includes Elk Grove youth to ride fare-free

ELK GROVE, CA – Join the City of Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen and Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) Superintendent Christopher R. Hoffman to ride Elk Grove transit to promote the fare-free for youth program called RydeFreeRT. The two officials will ride Elk Grove bus route E111 starting at 7:07 a.m. to get a first-hand experience of how well the transit program works and greet students with goodie bags.

WHAT: Ride-a-long with Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen and EGUSD Superintendent Chris Hoffman.

WHEN: Wednesday, August 25, 2021
7:07 a.m.

WHERE: Bus Route E111
Vaux Avenue at Laguna Main Street
Elk Grove, CA

WHY: Removing barriers and providing opportunity and access for students before and after school with safe and free transportation options is a win-win for all.

Background: Elk Grove Transit Services (e-tran) became part of the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) on July 1, 2021, and as one of the benefits of the annexation agreement, the RydeFreeRT program became available for all Elk Grove students/youth. RydeFreeRT allows students/youth in grades TK-12th to ride SacRT bus, light rail and on-demand SmaRT Ride microtransit services for free. Learn more at rydefreert.com.

Ride-a-long bus stop location (bus departs at 7:07 a.m.):

*Last bus stop is on Big Horn Boulevard at Civic Center Drive in front of District 56/Aquatics Center (bus ends at this stop at 7:45 a.m.) Shuttle available back to Vaux Ave and Laguna Main St.



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 25, 2021

Elk Grove Transit Ride-A-Long to Promote Free Rides for Students SacRT's RydeFreeRT program now includes Elk Grove youth to ride fare-free

Elk Grove, CA—Today, the City of Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen and Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) Superintendent Christopher R. Hoffman rode Elk Grove transit to promote the fare-free for youth program called RydeFreeRT. The two officials rode bus route E111 this morning to get first-hand experience of how well the transit program works, and greet the students that were riding with goodie bags.

Elk Grove Transit Services (e-tran) became part of the SacRT District on July 1, 2021, and as one of the benefits of the annexation agreement, the RydeFreeRT program became available for all Elk Grove students/youth. RydeFreeRT allows students/youth in grades TK-12th to ride SacRT bus, light rail and on-demand SmaRT Ride microtransit services for free.

Since Thursday, August 19, Elk Grove students have taken advantage of more than 1,000 free rides with the RydeFreeRT program.

"I think every Elk Grove family should know about the RydeFreeRT fare program. It's a safe, convenient, and free option for getting our students to school that reduces traffic on the roads and supports a cleaner environment," said City of Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen.

"Greater access to safe transportation for our students with RydeFreeRT opens scores of opportunities for Elk Grove and Sacramento youth. For our students, having the ability to safely move from point A to point B at no cost to go to school, work or play is a real game changer. We want to help spread that message and make sure all of our students are aware of this opportunity," said EGUSD Superintendent Christopher R. Hoffman.

"We are excited the City of Elk Grove has rejoined the SacRT family. As part of this reunion, we are ecstatic to bring numerous transit benefits to the city, including our tremendously popular RydeFreeRT program for students and youth," said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li.

A recent study on youth ridership published by the University of Texas at Austin found a statistically significant increase in the share of students reporting SacRT use to get to and from school, as well as a corresponding statistically significant decrease in the share of students reporting automobile use. Youth who reported using SacRT also reported that they can more easily access important non-school destinations because of the RydeFreeRT program. Many students not necessarily using SacRT to get to school regularly reported they are using the service more to get to after school and non-school activities because of the RydeFreeRT program. Learn more about the study and the RydeFreeRT program at rydefreert.com.

To view Elk Grove bus routes and schedules visit sacrt.com/elkgrovetransit.

Media DropBox

SacRT / SacRT Elk Grove Ride-A-Long 8.25.2021



Upload

Create



Name

Modified

Who can access



Elk Grove Transit broll video.mov



8/25/2021 8:37 am
by you

Parent + others



Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen.mov



8/25/2021 8:21 am
by you

Parent



Chris Hoffman, EGUSD Superintendent.mov



8/25/2021 8:23 am
by you

Parent



Photos



--

Parent + others

Ride-A-Long



Media Coverage

Elk Grove Citizen

A Herburger Publication

SacRT offers free bus rides to local students

By Cameron Macdonald Citizen News Editor Sep 3, 2021



From left: Elk Grove Unified School District Trustee Nancy Chaires Espinoza, Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen, and Elk Grove Unified's superintendent, Christopher Hoffman promote SacRT's free bus ride program for students on Aug. 25.

Photos by Steve Crowley



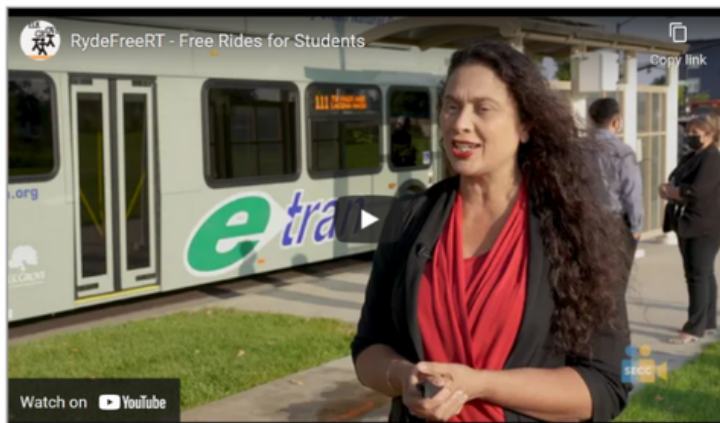
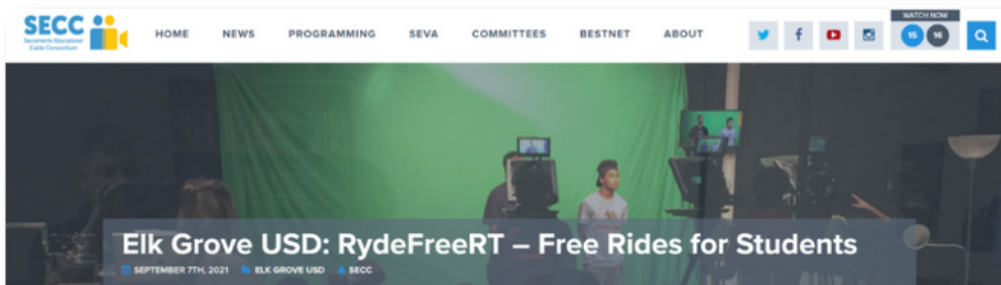
TOTAL STORIES

10



AUDIENCE REACHED

152,284



The City of Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen, Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) Superintendent Christopher R. Hoffman and EGUSD School Board Member Nancy Chaires Espinoza rode Elk Grove transit to promote the fare-free for youth program called RydeFreeRT. The two officials rode bus route E111 to get first-hand experience of how well the transit program works, and greet the students that were riding with goodie bags.

Social Media Analytics

Sacramento Regional Transit @RideSacRT · Aug 25, 2021

Students can ride Elk Grove Transit for FREE! This morning @CityofElkGrove Mayor @SinghAllen, @ElkGroveUnified Superintendent Chris Hoffman and EGUSD Board Member @NancyChaires rode bus route E111 to greet the students that were riding with goodie bags.



0:17 364 views

1 comment 9 retweets 18 likes

Sacramento Regional Transit @RideSacRT · Aug 25, 2021

Learn more about RydeFreeRT and how Elk Grove students can ride for free bit.ly/3sQ5lYu.

1 comment 3 likes


Impressions	Engagements	Detail expands
5,301	116	40
New followers	Profile visits	
0	17	

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
12,161

Sacramento Regional Transit District is in Elk Grove, California.

Published by Jessica Gonzalez · August 25, 2021

Students can ride Elk Grove Transit for FREE! This morning City of Elk Grove - City Hall Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen for Mayor, Elk Grove Unified School District Superintendent Chris Hoffman and EGUSD Board Member Nancy Chaires rode bus route E111 to get first-hand experience of how well the fare-free for youth transit program works and greet the students that were riding with goodie bags. Learn more about RydeFreeRT and how Elk Grove students can ride for free <https://bit.ly/3sQ5lYu>.



6,660 People reached 525 Engagements

Boost post

15 reactions 32 Shares

ridesact
Elk Grove, California

RYDE FREE RT
Grades 14-22



0:27

View insights Boost Post

131 views · Liked by jibewithus

ridesact Students can ride Elk Grove Transit for FREE! This morning, Wednesday, August 25, 2021, @cityofelkgrove Mayor @bobbie4mayor, @elkgroveunified Superintendent Chris Hoffman and EGUSD Board Member Nancy Chaires rode bus route E111 to get first-hand experience of how well the fare-free for youth transit program works and greet the students that were riding with goodie bags. Learn more about RydeFreeRT and how Elk Grove students can ride for free at the [link](https://bit.ly/3sQ5lYu) in our bio (rydefreert.com).

August 25, 2021

TWITTER:
IMPRESSIONS: 5,301

FACEBOOK:
REACH: 6,600

INSTAGRAM:
IMPRESSIONS: 260

YouTube Video



TOTAL VIEWS
201

The video player shows a scene inside a bus with several students wearing face masks. A subtitle at the bottom of the video reads: "Being able to get to school, have kids get there safe,". The video player interface includes a search bar at the top, a play button, a progress bar at 0:23 / 3:12, and interaction buttons for likes (3), dislikes, shares, and saves. The channel name "ElkGroveUnified" with 8.64K subscribers and a "SUBSCRIBE" button are visible at the bottom.

RydeFreeRT - Free Rides for Students

201 views • Sep 3, 2021

3 DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

ElkGroveUnified
8.64K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

Elk Grove Student Ridership

