



marin transit

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September 18, 2017

Honorable Board of Directors  
Marin County Transit District  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SUBJECT: Analysis of 2016-17 School Transit Services and Transit Youth Pass Program**

**board of directors**

Dear Board Members:

katie rice  
president  
supervisor district 2

**RECOMMENDATION:** Accept Report

stephanie moulton-peters  
vice president  
city of mill valley

**BACKGROUND:** School-based trips are a significant share of ridership on Marin Transit services, and demand for school service continues to rise each year. Students in K-12 and higher education programs countywide rely on public transit and yellow bus service to attend a host of academic campuses. This letter summarizes the District’s operational activities during the 2016-17 academic year related to supplemental public transit school services, the yellow bus program the District managed in Ross Valley, the College of Marin (COM) student pass program, and the College of Marin express service (Route 122). The letter also provides a summary and analysis of the 2016-17 Marin Transit Youth Pass Program. The Youth Pass Program report is provided as an attachment to this letter.

damon connolly  
2nd vice president  
supervisor district 1

judy arnold  
director  
supervisor district 5

**Supplemental School**

kate colin  
director  
city of san rafael

The District provides ten Supplemental School routes to accommodate overcrowding on regular public transit services due to the demand for school-related transportation. These routes operate school days only and add capacity at specific times of the day when schools start and release. These services are open to the public and operate with published timetables. The supplemental routes provide approximately 36 additional peak hour bus trips daily and carry an average of over 1,000 daily passenger trips, about 30 students per bus.

dennis rodoni  
director  
supervisor district 4

kathrin sears  
director  
supervisor district 3

Due primarily to equipment availability, the Supplemental School transit operation is at capacity and does not provide room for expansion. A combination of factors has consumed any additional ability to provide new service on school days. These factors include: limited parking and maintenance facility resources, fleet limitations,

adjustments to schedules in response to shifting school bell times, and increasing ridership.

The continued growth in Supplemental School route ridership is a positive trend for the District, and supports congestion relief in the County. However, the constraints identified above do not allow for additional services. These capacity constraints also challenge the District's ability to maintain reliability. Supplemental service is intended to add service capacity and reduce the pressure on the general public's access to regular local transit services. Student transit ridership in many parts of the County is so high that even these regular services are full, and some passengers experience extended wait times.

Staff continue to monitor conditions and work with school administrators and parents to ensure that riders can depend on Marin Transit services. Ongoing growth in student enrollments and ridership has created challenges during the peak school days. The District is actively pursuing longer-term solutions identified in the Coordinated Countywide School Transportation Study through a subcommittee of your Board. Staff will continue these efforts in the coming months and incorporate these into the new Short Range Transit Plan.

### **Transit Youth Pass Program**

Marin Transit has offered a school-based Youth Pass Program to Marin County students for the past nine years. In Fiscal Year 2016-17, over 4,000 youth pass "stickers" were distributed to 32 participating public and private schools. Youth Pass distribution levels were slightly higher than last year. A complete analysis of the 2016-17 Youth Pass Program is attached.

### **Ross Valley School District Yellow Bus Program**

Marin Transit continued contracting for yellow school bus operations in Ross Valley for the 2016-2017 school year. In the program's second year, over 550 students signed up for the service that offered transportation to families from around the school district to White Hill and Hidden Valley Schools. Marin Transit contracted for the operation of six yellow buses with a local school bus provider, Michael's Transportation. Through a partnership with the County of Marin, Michael's had access to mid-day and overnight parking in San Rafael. This eliminated the need for buses to travel back and forth between Marin and Vallejo where the company headquarters is located.

Marin Transit offered three pass types for this program: AM only, PM only, or AM and PM. Prices ranged from \$700 for the full year of round-trip service to \$235 for a semester of one-way service. For annual AM/PM pass holders, the cost was less than \$1.95 per trip. Each pass was available for purchase for either a semester or a year and was payable in full or in monthly installments. All passes were available for purchase through the website District staff developed for the program at <https://store.marintransit.org>. Students whose families demonstrated income restrictions were eligible to obtain a reduced-price bus pass by submitting an application to the Ross Valley School District. The cost of the reduced-price bus pass was \$200 for an annual AM + PM pass.

Enrollment opened in late May 2016 and continued throughout the Summer. By the end of the school year, 550 Ross Valley students had a pass to ride the yellow bus. Table 1 provides a breakdown of pass sales by school and pass type and a comparison with pass sales in 2015-2016. Annual pass sales increased in the second year of the yellow bus service. This shows strong support for the program and commitment from parents to use service throughout the school year and not just seasonally based on weather or after school programs.

At White Hill School, 2015-2016 peak ridership on the yellow bus approached 330 students in the morning and 400 students in the afternoon. The biggest complaint from parents and drivers was overcrowding in the afternoon. Average peak ridership on yellow bus service during the 2016-2017 school year showed slightly higher morning ridership (+10) and lower afternoon ridership (-50) compared to the peak of last year. The reduced peak numbers in the PM was a result of limiting PM pass sales to reduce overcrowding. Table 2 summarizes average ridership by school for the AM and PM routes.

**Table 1: Summary of Pass Holders 2015-2016 v. 2016-17 School Year**

| School                              | AM only  |          | PM only  |          | AM and PM |          | Total      |            |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|
|                                     | 2015/16  | 2016/17  | 2015/16  | 2016/17  | 2015/16   | 2016/17  | 2015/16    | 2016/17    |
|                                     | \$365.00 | \$430.00 | \$365.00 | \$430.00 | \$600.00  | \$700.00 |            |            |
| White Hill                          | 9        | 22       | 47       | 45       | 391       | 393      | 447        | 460        |
| Hidden Valley                       | 23       | 24       | 2        | 7        | 19        | 17       | 43         | 48         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                        |          |          |          |          |           |          | <b>490</b> | <b>508</b> |
| <b>Fall Semester Pass Holders</b>   |          |          |          |          |           |          |            |            |
| White Hill                          | 6        | 5        | 17       | 8        | 31        | 30       | 54         | 43         |
| Hidden Valley                       | 1        | 2        | 2        | 0        | 6         | 0        | 9          | 2          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                        |          |          |          |          |           |          | <b>63</b>  | <b>45</b>  |
| <b>Spring Semester Pass Holders</b> |          |          |          |          |           |          |            |            |
| White Hill                          | 6        | 4        | 15       | 12       | 36        | 32       | 57         | 48         |
| Hidden Valley                       | 3        | 1        | 2        | 1        | 7         | 1        | 12         | 3          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                        |          |          |          |          |           |          | <b>69</b>  | <b>51</b>  |

**Table 2: Average Peak Ridership 2016-2017 School Year**

| School        | AM Routes  | PM Routes  |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| White Hill    | 341        | 357        |
| Hidden Valley | 33         | 16         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>374</b> | <b>373</b> |

While White Hill routes operated at capacity through most of the year, Hidden Valley passes did not sell out during the school year. As a result, a pay-per-ride program for Hidden Valley students was continued from the previous year. Families could purchase ticket booklets of 5 or 10 passes for \$20 or \$40, respectively. Hidden Valley students purchased a total of 80 single ride passes between October 2015 and June 2016, at six orders of 5-ticket booklets and five orders of 10-ticket booklets.

**College of Marin Class Pass Program and Express Route 122**

In August 2015, Marin Transit and the College of Marin (COM) began a partnership that enables students to use a valid College of Marin student ID to ride any local Marin Transit service. The program is funded through a COM transportation fee approved by 72 percent of the student body in Spring 2015. Fall/Winter passes are valid from August through January, and Spring/Summer passes are valid from January through August. During the 2016-17 school year, over 4,500 passes were issued and an average of 500 local bus trips were taken using the pass each day.

This Class Pass program also includes a new, faster route to the Kentfield campus. The Route 122 links the San Rafael Transit Center to the campus with one stop in San Anselmo, reducing the travel time by about 25 percent compared to other local routes. During the 2016-17 school year, Route 122 carried an average of 107 passengers daily. Compared to the prior year, total ridership remained relatively constant, but productivity increased from 6.9 passengers per hour to 11.7 passengers per hour. This was mainly due to modifications made for the Fall 2016 semester that eliminated trips with low ridership.

One of the most common service requests from students has been for later southbound service from the Kentfield campus. As part of the most recent major service changes in June 2016, the District added more service on Route 22 to help accommodate this request. Route 29 was also restructured to provide another more direct option to campus from the San Rafael Transit Center, and Route 228 to the campus was expanded to operate daily. For the upcoming 2016-17 school year, trips have been added on Route 122 to accommodate demand for earlier morning service to campus and later afternoon service returning from campus. Staff will continue to monitor this service, and make adjustments to better match ridership and demand.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Betts  
Director of Planning and Operations

**Attachment A:** Analysis of the 2016-2017 Youth Pass Program

Attachment A