

# Coordinated Countywide School Transportation Study Existing Conditions Assessment White Paper

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# Introduction

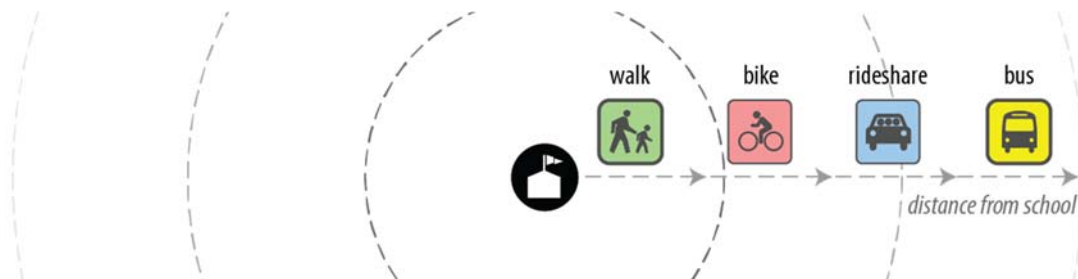
## Study Objective

In an attempt to relieve roadway congestion from school traffic, encourage healthy mobility for students, and expand transportation offerings to students and parents, this study evaluates how current transit and school bus service is used by students in Marin County to get to school and identifies opportunities for increasing walking, biking, busing, or carpool trips (“green trips”). The core focus will be on identifying an appropriate and scalable model(s) for bus service, evaluating new walking and biking programs, and identifying opportunities for how this model(s) could be coordinated and integrated into the current Safe Routes to School (SR2S) offerings.

## Study Background

Although much of the regional roadway congestion is concentrated along the Highway 101, local streets within Marin County face a much different type of congestion. Between 21 and 27% of all morning commute traffic countywide is comprised of parents driving their children to school (Marin Congestion Management Agency).

In 2004, Marin County voters approved Measure A, a 20-year, half-cent sales tax dedicated to funding transportation improvements throughout the County. Fifty-five percent (55%) of this funding was allocated to Marin Transit and another 11% to the Safe Routes to School program. This sustainable funding source allowed both programs to improve school transportation options. With their similar goals to reduce congestion and provide a safe means of transportation for Marin's youth, these programs provide complementary transportation offerings and benefit from improved coordination. As shown in the figure below, successful Safe Routes and Bus programs complement each other ... with Safe Routes programs generally focused on walking and bicycling, and supporting rideshare and busing programs focused on longer school commutes. Both programs aim to reduce vehicular traffic.



While school bus programs currently exist for student transportation within Marin County, these efforts have grown organically and have not been coordinated among the sponsors and providers. School districts tend to be the primary decision makers and, to some extent, the providers of student transportation service. The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) plays a key role in development of non-motorized school

transportation services, and administering Measure A funds and oversight of the Safe Routes program. This program includes a systematic and monitored approach to encourage walking and bicycling to and from school. This program identifies potential travel markets appropriate for walking and bicycling, and also integrates carpooling and bus use education and encouragement programs. Overall this program demonstrates a considerable success in school travel, and serves as a complementary program to longer range trip behaviors addressed by carpooling, transit and bus services.

This study will provide an assessment of all programs and organizations within the County currently involved in the provision of regular home-to-school student transportation and identify opportunities to work cooperatively to provide the most effective options to meet specific student and school site needs. This initial report in the study catalogs existing conditions as a foundation for the development of the recommendations. The next report will identify and outline a framework to increase bus transportation offerings, make them more efficient, and improve coordination with the other home to school transportation programs.

### **Project Area**

The geographic focus area of this study is the urbanized area of Marin County, which includes eleven incorporated cities and towns. The total county population is 258,365<sup>1</sup>, including the rural and unincorporated areas in the western portion of the county. The population of the urbanized area of the County, which includes some unincorporated areas, is 238,198. Thus 92% of the County's population and 95% of the County's school-aged population is included in this effort. Table 1 lists characteristics of the study area (urbanized portion of the county) and the compares to the countywide totals.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey 2009-2013 5-year Estimates

**Table 1: Project Area Profile**

Characteristic	Study Area	Countywide
Urbanized Area Population	<b>238,198</b>	258,365
School-age Population (5-17) Count	<b>36,868</b>	38,998
School-age Population (5-17) Percentage	<b>15.4%</b>	15%
Minority Population Percentage	<b>24.7%</b>	20.6
Median Age	<b>44.4</b>	44.8
Housing Units	<b>102,231</b>	111,351
Average Household Size	<b>2.39</b>	2.39
Median Household Income	<b>\$91,564</b>	\$90,839
Median Home Value	<b>\$777,800</b>	\$781,900
Percentage of Population in Poverty <sup>2</sup>	<b>19.2%</b>	19.4%
Percentage of Population over 25 with a high school diploma or higher	<b>92.2%</b>	92.4

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey

### Transportation Challenges

Independent of school travel, Marin County is faced with a number of transportation challenges. These challenges are not unique to Marin and include roadway congestion, barriers or obstacles and safety. Like much of the Bay Area, Marin County faces high levels of roadway congestion during peak travel times.

The County's natural settings defined by its bordering oceans and bays, the rolling topography, and pockets of focused development within the valleys and along historic rail corridors, create limited opportunities for connectivity within the transportation network. Its location between San Francisco, Sonoma County, and the East Bay positions it at a crossroads for regional traffic moving between these more densely populated areas.

Within the urbanized areas of Marin County, Highway 101 provides the only continuous north-south connection and a series of other state highways and local arterials provides east-west connections. In most areas of the County, congestion levels are heaviest during traditional weekday peak hours. Approximately 75% of Marin workers commute to work in an automobile with 90% of the auto commuters driving alone. This equals approximately 90,000 commuters or 180,000 daily commute trips made by automobile.

Aside from commute traffic, another contributor to congestion is school-related transportation. It's been estimated that approximately 21-27% of all peak hour traffic is related to this trip purpose. There are currently

<sup>2</sup> Poverty is defined as below 200% of federal poverty level in the Bay Area

an estimated 40,000 K-12 students enrolled in all public and private schools in Marin County and an estimated 62% of all students get to school via car, with 80% of these students riding alone or not in a carpool. This equates to approximately 25,000 students or 50,000 daily student trips made by automobile.

While very few schools are located adjacent to the Highway 101 corridor or near interchanges to the freeway, many schools are located adjacent to the arterials that feed the freeway and move people within Marin County. The combination of school trips and commute trips, in addition to general purpose traffic, create crippling conditions throughout the County. This congestion is at its worst during the morning commute when peak school and work start times are most aligned.

Much of the current transportation network and land use development patterns were originally established by the rail lines. People and goods traveling between Marin County and San Francisco were funneled to ferry ports at Larkspur/San Quentin, Tiburon, and Sausalito. The completion of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937 and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge in 1956 introduced new portals for the automobile that now dominates the mobility network.

Highway 101 is the primary north south freeway in Marin County and carries the majority of all traffic. Caltrans oversees the operations of traffic on this corridor and has made recent capacity improvements widening to four or five lanes in each direction throughout most of the County.

Supplying east-west connections at 22 interchanges in Marin are a series of freeways, highways, and arterials. Freeways and highways operated by Caltrans include Interstate 580, Highway 131 (Tiburon Blvd. / East Blithedale), Highway 37 and Highway 1. Other major local arterials that feed the Highway 101 include South Novato Boulevard (Novato), Lucas Valley Road (San Rafael), Manual Freitas Parkway (San Rafael), 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/Mission (Downtown San Rafael), Sir Francis Drake (Larkspur), Paradise (Corte Madera), and Bridgeway/Donahue (Sausalito).

### Congestion Monitoring

Congestion levels are monitored every other year by the Transportation Authority of Marin as part of the Congestion Management Program (CMP). This program uses level-of-service standards to quantify congestion levels and roadway performance. Roadway facilities monitored in this program were identified in 1991 and include all state highways and principal arterial roadways within the County. Non-State CMP roadways were included based on the following criteria:

- Purpose and function of the roadway
- Land use adjacent to the roadway and proximity to activity centers
- Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume, generally greater than 25,000 daily vehicles
- Connectivity to other facilities

The CMP provides a countywide assessment of congestion levels on these roadway facilities during the PM peak hour (highest volume of traffic during a 60-minute interval, typically between 5:00-6:00 PM). Since much of the traffic associated with schools is not in place during these early evening hours, using the actual performance results to assess impacts from school trips can be misleading. The CMP is useful to define a countywide roadway network that is critical to moving traffic and providing connectivity throughout the County. As these facilities already carry a high percentage of all the traffic in Marin County, any additional demand creates an exaggerated increase in delay. Reduction of school related trips on these facilities will have significant benefit to local and regional congestion levels countywide.

Roadways included in the CMP and their relationship to schools sites are shown in Figure 1 and PM Peak hour Level of Service (LOS) ratings are shown in Figure 2. CMP roadway segments are further described in

Table 2. In total, the CMP roadway network consists of 123 miles; 91 miles of state highways and 32 miles of principal arterial segments.

**Table 2: Marin County CMP Roadways**

Roadway	From	To	Type
State Route 1	Sonoma County line	US 101	Arterial
State Route 37	US 101	Sonoma County line	Freeway
US 101	Sonoma County line	San Francisco County line	Freeway
State Route 131	US 101	Main Street in Tiburon	Arterial
Interstate 580	US 101	Contra Costa County line	Freeway
Novato Blvd. / S. Novato Blvd.	Sutro Ave. / San Marin Dr.	US 101	Arterial
Bel Marin Keys Blvd.	US 101 SB ramps	Commercial Blvd.	Arterial
Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	State Route 1	Interstate 580	Arterial
Red Hill Ave. / 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. / 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	US 101	Arterial
Bridgeway / Second St. / Alexander Ave.	US 101	US 101	Arterial

**Source:** Marin County Congestion Management Program 2013 Update (October 15, 2013)



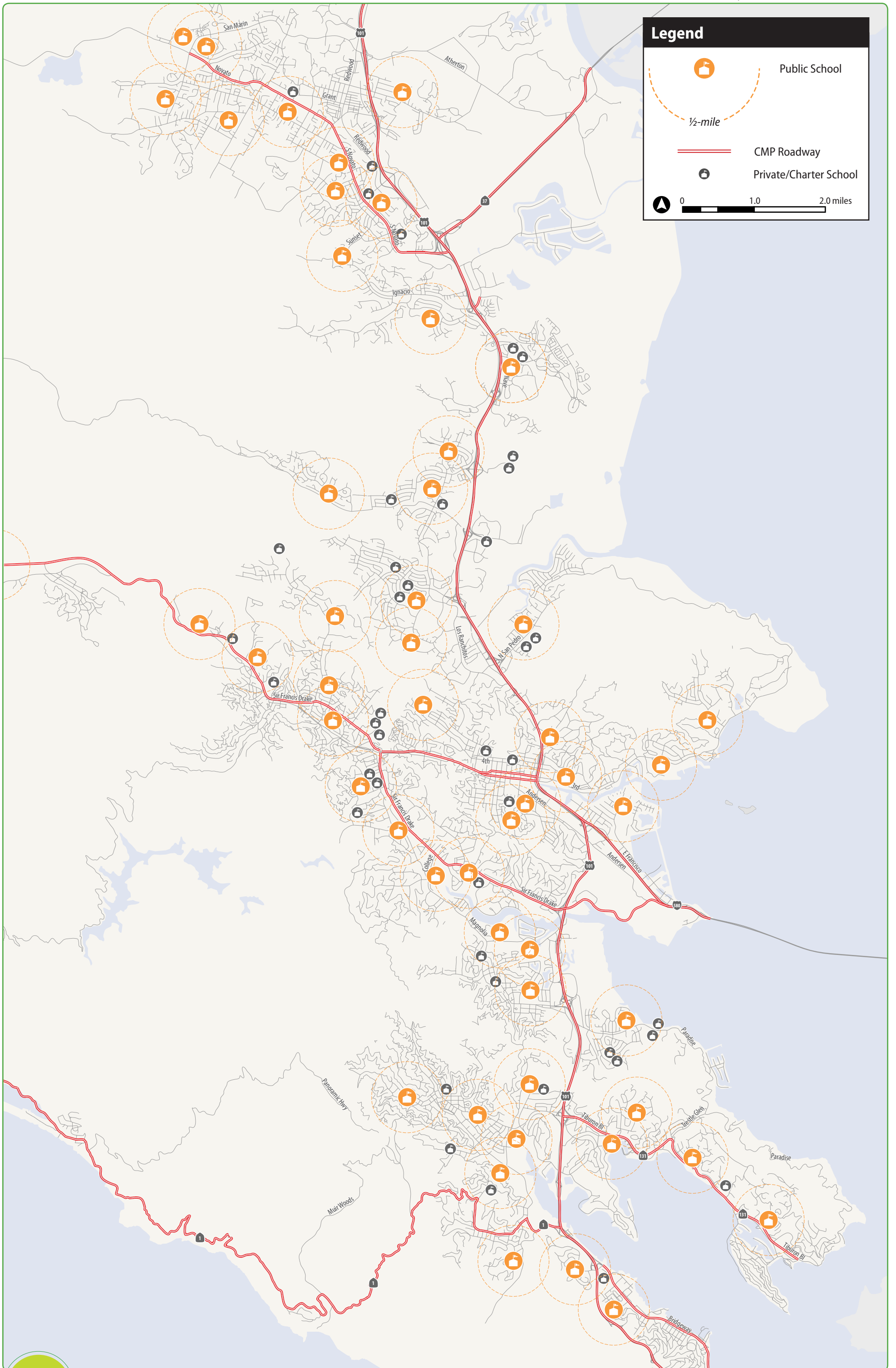


Figure 1: Marin County CMP Roadways and School Sites

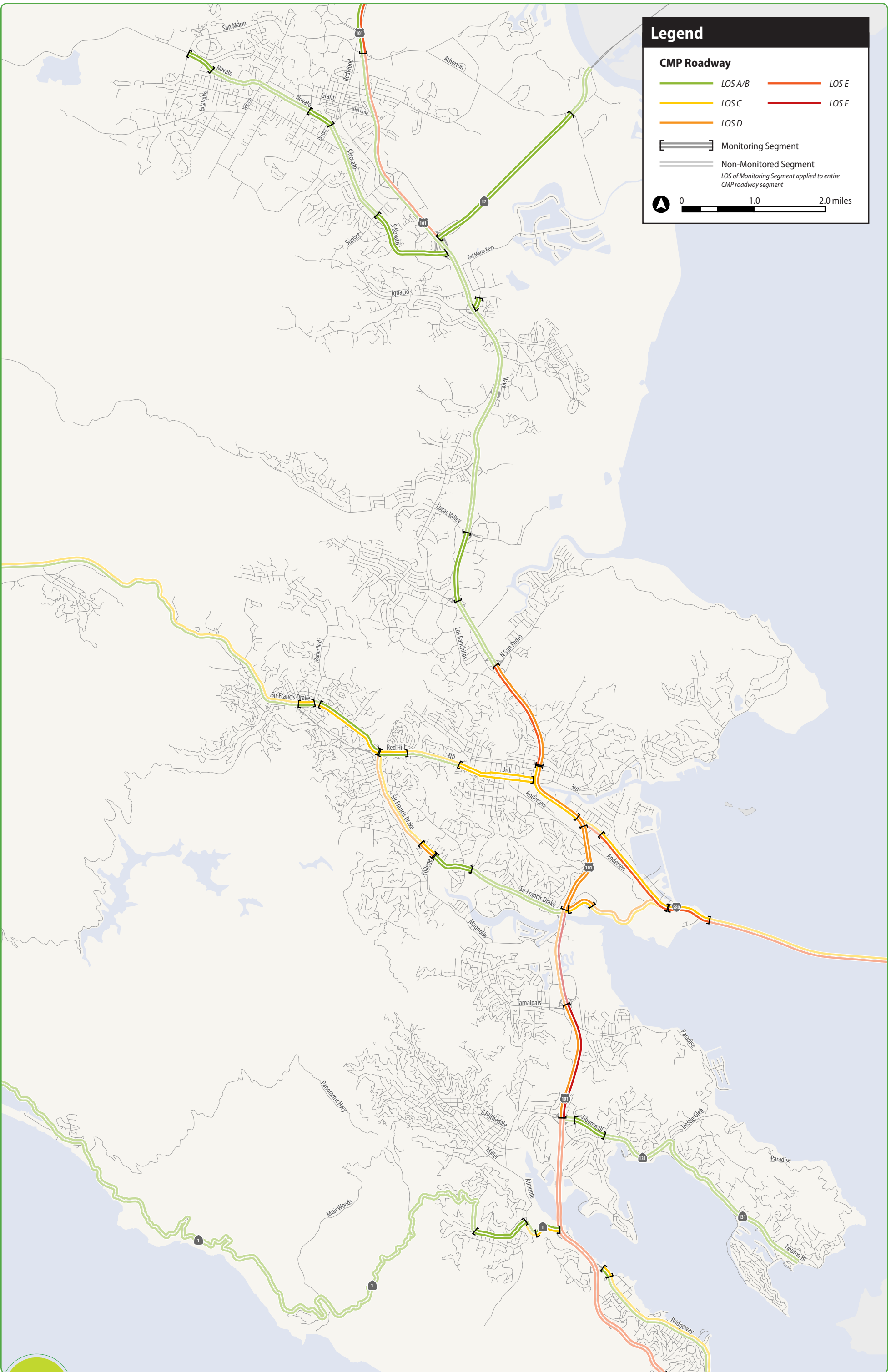


Figure 2: Marin County CMP Roadway Level of Service – PM Peak

## Transportation Barriers and Obstacles

As previously discussed, Marin County's topography, waterways, and limited roadway network provide many barriers for mobility. In addition to natural obstacles, improvements and upgrades to the transportation network have created new barriers to connectivity. These include historic state highways that have been upgraded to freeways, high capacity and/or divided highways, and the current reactivation of the railroad corridor. Crossing these transportation systems are often either not physically possible or raise safety considerations. These safety considerations are especially true when considering younger school children and often create pockets of students within a school district that are isolated from a transportation standpoint. Examples include the Olive neighborhood in the Novato School District, East Corte Madera in the Larkspur-Corte Madera District, and Strawberry in the Mill Valley District. The school maps shown in Appendix A highlight these barriers and show them relative to schools sites and enrollment boundaries.

Overcoming these barriers is a challenge when evaluating the daily commute for school children. The Safe Routes to School program works with local schools, parents, teachers and local jurisdiction staff to identify many of these challenges primarily for walking and bicycling. One element of the Safe Routes to Schools program includes the Safe Pathways program which helps to fund infrastructure improvements that improve safety in these areas while encouraging walking and biking.

Ridesharing, carpooling, or bus services (where available) are also key to overcoming transportation barriers and obstacles.

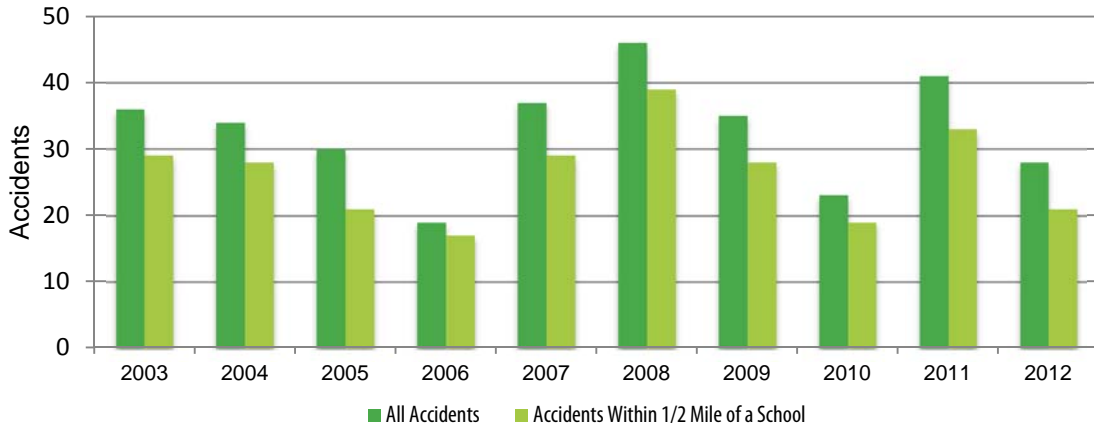
## Student Safety

Over the 10-year period between 2003 and 2012, there have been an average of 33 collisions per year involving a pedestrian or cyclist victim aged 5-18 in Marin County. This equates to a total of 329 collisions over this 10-year period. 264 collisions, or 80% of the 329, occurred within a half-mile of a school<sup>3</sup>. Hour by hour, the highest concentration of collisions occurred between 2-3pm (14%) and 3-4pm (12%). Figure 3 shows the number of collisions by year and the school maps in Appendix A show all locations of these collisions.

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<sup>3</sup> Elementary, middle, high, alternative, and charter schools are included.

**Figure 3: Collisions Involving a Pedestrian or Cyclist Victim Aged 5-18 in Marin County**



**Source:** Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System

## Schools Overview

The following sections provides an overview of all public and private schools in Marin County and discusses how students currently travel to school. Appendix A of this report provides additional detail on all public schools in Marin County.

### Public Schools

In total, 59 public schools in 13 districts within or adjacent to the urbanized areas in Marin County are included in this assessment. Table 3 shows a summary of these districts and a breakdown of the schools and 2013-14 estimated enrollment. Table 3 matrix included on pages 13-15 shows a summary of each public school in Marin County and an assessment of transportation services available to their students. A transportation cut-sheet summary of each school and the districts including maps is shown in Appendix A.

**Table 3: School Districts Included in Study Scope**

District Name	# Elementary	# Middle	# K-8	# High	Total	2013-14 Enrollment
Dixie Elementary	3	1	-	-	4	1,938
Kentfield School District	1	1	-	-	2	1,250
Lagunitas Elementary	2	-	-	-	2	309
Larkspur-Corte Madera	2	1	-	-	3	1,462
Mill Valley Elementary	5	1	-	-	6	3,260
Novato Unified	7	2	2	3	14	8,078
Reed Union Elementary	2	1	-	-	3	1,556
Ross Elementary	1	-	-	-	1	379
Ross Valley Elementary	4	1	-	-	5	2,291
San Rafael City Elementary	8	1	1	-	10	4,509
San Rafael City High	-	-	-	3	3	2,196
Sausalito Marin City	-	-	2	-	2	470
Tamalpais Union High	-	-	-	4	4	4,060
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>31,758</b>

Schools Matrix

Academic Year 2013/14

District	Location	Total	% Minority	Green Trip Rate	Total rate of non-family vehicle trips								SR2S Rating	Crossing Guards	Collisions	Marin Transit Service					Yellow Bus			
School	Type	(Darker color = higher value)			walk	bike	bus	carpool	transit	family vehicle	Determined by Green Trip Rate & Participation	Within a half-mile	With Ped/Bike Victims Age 5-18 within 1/2 mile	Marin Transit Routes Timed to School	Marin Transit Routes that Serve the School	Ridership/Day	Total 6-month Youth Passes Distributed	% of Free Youth Passes Distributed	# of routes that serve the school	# of Trips	Operator	Ridership/Day		
Dixie Elementary	San Rafael																							
Dixie Elementary	Elementary, K-5	394	24%	44%	19%	5%	18%	7%	0%	52%	51	1	0	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	2	4	In-house	76		
Mary E. Silveira Elementary	Elementary, K-5	455	38%	55%	27%	3%	15%	6%	0%	48%	57	2	3	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	1	2	In-house	65		
Miller Creek Middle	Middle, 6-8	628	29%	76%	25%	14%	27%	9%	0%	24%	81	3	6	NA	257	44	NA	NA	5	10	In-house	165		
Vallecito Elementary	Elementary, K-5	457	34%	46%	26%	4%	7%	9%	0%	55%	43	3	7	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	2	4	In-house	30		
Kentfield	Kentfield																							
Adaline E. Kent Middle	Middle, 5-8	546	27%	56%	31%	11%	0%	13%	0%	41%	64	4	2	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Anthony G. Bacich	Elementary, K-4	700	30%	51%	26%	7%	1%	14%	0%	48%	61	1	3	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Lagunitas Elementary	San Geronimo																							
Lagunitas Elementary	Elementary, K-8	164	18%	39%	4%	5%	24%	9%	0%	59%	41	0	0	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	1	1	In-house	39		
San Geronimo Valley	Elementary, K-6	145	19%	39%	4%	5%	24%	9%	0%	59%	41	0	0	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	1	1	In-house	26		
Larkspur-Corte Madera	Larkspur, Corte Madera																							
Cove	Elementary, K-5	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	58%	19%	19%	6%	8%	3%	42%	NA	--		117	113	36	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Hall Middle School	Middle, 5-8	621	29%	71%	20%	25%	7%	9%	8%	32%	78	3	12	117	NA	122	278	39%	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Neil Cummins	Elementary, K-4	840	24%	51%	21%	15%	0%	10%	1%	50%	NA	3	10	NA	22, 117	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Mill Valley Elementary	Mill Valley																							
Edna Maguire	Elementary, K-5	603	26%	46%	17%	11%	0%	17%	0%	54%	53	1	1	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Mill Valley Middle	Elementary, 6-8	1,019	23%	66%	27%	24%	0%	13%	1%	34%	76	4	7	NA	17, 61, 115	44	32	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Old Mill Elementary	Elementary, K-5	336	17%	55%	37%	5%	0%	12%	1%	45%	62	4	1	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Park	Elementary, P-5	364	17%	65%	51%	9%	0%	4%	0%	35%	71	3	4	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Strawberry	Elementary, K-5	433	32%	37%	19%	4%	0%	16%	0%	60%	48	1	1	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Tamalpais Valley	Elementary, K-6	502	16%	40%	18%	12%	0%	10%	0%	59%	50	1	1	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Notavo Unified	Novato																							
Hamilton Meadow Park	K-8	728	69%	42%	21%	3%	3%	11%	0%	61%	40	1	2	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Loma Verde	Elementary, K-5	437	62%	42%	18%	7%	0%	16%	0%	59%	43	1	2	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Lu Sutton	Elementary, K-5	386	70%	38%	18%	7%	1%	12%	0%	62%	43	3	24	NA	NA	44	4	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Lynwood Elmentary	Elementary, K-6	357	80%	42%	22%	3%	0%	12%	1%	62%	38	2	7	NA	NA	44	16	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA		

Schools Matrix

Academic Year 2013/14

District	Location	Total	% Minority	Total rate of non-family vehicle trips	walk	bike	bus	carpool	transit	family vehicle	Determined by Green Trip Rate & Participation	Crossing Guards	Collisions	Within a half-mile	With Ped/Bike Victims Age 5-18 within 1/2 mile	Marin Transit Routes Timed to School	Marin Transit Routes that Serve the School	Ridership/Day	Total 6-month Youth Passes Distributed	% of Free Youth Passes Distributed	# of routes that serve the school	# of Trips	Operator	Ridership/Day
School	Type	Enrollment (Darker color = higher value)	Green Trip Rate	Mode Split							SR2S Rating	Crossing Guards	Collisions	Marin Transit Service					Yellow Bus					
Marin Oaks High	High, 9-12	71	83%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	3	10	NA	NA	NA	62	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Nova Education Center		51	29%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	1	26	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Novato Charter	K-8	259	18%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	1	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Novato High	High, 9-13	1,358	46%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	3	10	NA	151, 251, 259	47	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Olive Elementary	Elementary, K-5	368	48%	30%	10%	5%	4%	12%	0%	68%	35	1	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Pleasant Valley Elementary	Elementary, K-6	499	25%	37%	15%	9%	1%	12%	0%	62%	44	2	3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Rancho Elementary	Elementary, K-5	498	34%	39%	19%	1%	0%	17%	0%	63%	39	4	12	NA	NA	NA	2	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
San Jose Intermediate	Middle, 6-8	717	56%	54%	10%	6%	2%	29%	8%	47%	56	1	4	151	251	31	193	98%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
San Marin High	High, 9-12	932	38%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	2	4	151	154, 251	50	160	98%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
San Ramon	Elementary, K-5	469	42%	35%	12%	5%	5%	13%	1%	66%	40	2	4	NA	NA	NA	4	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Sinaloa Middle	Middle, 6-8	860	37%	51%	14%	13%	2%	18%	4%	50%	NA	3	8	154	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Reed Union Elementary	Tiburon																							
Bel Aire	Elementary, 3-5	538	14%	59%	12%	10%	24%	10%	0%	41%	59	2	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	7	Contracted	192	
Del Mar Middle	Middle, 6-8	473	15%	56%	13%	15%	13%	11%	3%	45%	NA	3	0	NA	115, 119, 219	NA	8	100%	3	6	Contracted	95		
Reed	Elementary, K-2	545	13%	34%	3%	3%	17%	11%	0%	66%	37	2	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	7	Contracted	98		
Ross Elementary	Ross																							
Ross Elementary	Elementary, K-8	378	11%	47%	21%	15%	0%	5%	0%	54%	51	2	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Ross Valley Elementary	San Anselmo, Fairfax																							
Brookside Elementary	Elementary, K-5	368	17%	59%	35%	7%	0%	14%	0%	40%	67	1	7	NA	126, 127	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Hidden Valley	Elementary, K-5	376	17%	44%	11%	14%	1%	15%	5%	54%		1	1	126	127	22	16	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Manor Elementary	Elementary, K-5	412	20%	57%	23%	16%	0%	16%	1%	42%	65	2	3	NA	NA	NA	2	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Wade Thomas Elementary	Elementary, K-5	448	19%	54%	26%	14%	0%	10%	0%	45%	59	2	8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
White Hill Middle	Middle, 6-8	686	13%	78%	5%	10%	0%	7%	8%	21%	86	1	3	127, 23	68	422	177	64%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
San Rafael City Elementary	San Rafael																							
Bahia Vista Elementary	Elementary, K-5	572	100%	68%	60%	0%	0%	8%	0%	31%	70	3	11	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	Contracted	0	
Coleman Elementary	Elementary, K-5	403	53%	46%	17%	3%	13%	12%	0%	54%	54	0	15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	4	Contracted	69	
Glenwood Elementary	Elementary, K-5	432	30%	47%	13%	8%	12%	14%	0%	52%	55	2	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	3	Contracted	58	

Schools Matrix

Academic Year 2013/14

District	Location	Total	% Minority	Total rate of non-family vehicle trips	walk	bike	bus	carpool	transit	family vehicle	Determined by Green Trip Rate & Participation	Within a half-mile	With Ped/Bike Victims Age 5-18 within 1/2 mile	Marin Transit Routes Timed to School	Marin Transit Routes that Serve the School	Ridership/Day	Total 6-month Youth Passes Distributed	% of Free Youth Passes Distributed	# of routes that serve the school	# of Trips	Operator	Ridership/Day
School	Type	Enrollment (Darker color = higher value)		Green Trip Rate	Mode Split							SR2S Rating	Crossing Guards	Collisions	Marin Transit Service				Yellow Bus			
James B. Davidson Middle	Middle, 6-8	1,024	69%	65%	15%	4%	26%	17%	5%	35%	71	2	26	NA	NA	NA	162	100%	8	14	Contracted	386
Laurel Dell Elementary	Elementary, K-5	218	83%	62%	19%	5%	33%	4%	0%	42%	66	2	7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	7	Contracted	78
San Pedro Elementary	Elementary, K-5	453	99%	95%	0%	0%	95%	0%	0%	5%	NA	0	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	9	14	Contracted	432
Short Elementary	Elementary, P-1	159	99%	68%	11%	0%	51%	4%	0%	35%	66	2	13	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	7	Contracted	108
Sun Valley Elementary	Elementary, K-5	502	29%	47%	18%	5%	12%	12%	0%	51%	55	2	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	6	Contracted	136
Venetia Valley Elementary	K-8	724	91%	44%	10%	1%	26%	8%	1%	55%	45	0	0	NA	233	NA	96	100%	5	8	Contracted	174
San Rafael City High	San Rafael																					
Madrone High Continuation	High, 9-12	51	94%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	2	0	NA	NA	NA	84	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA
San Rafael High	High, 9-12	1,100	71%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	3	14	NA	23, 29, 35, 36, 233	222	886	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Terra Linda High	High, 9-12	1,039	55%	41%	9%	2%	0%	23%	4%	59%	NA	2	3	139, 145	45K	42	NA	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sausalito Marin City	Sausalito																					
Bayside MLK Jr. Academy	K-8	145	94%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	0	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Willow Creek Academy	K-8	322	63%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	0	1	115	17	14	174	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tamalpais Union High	Larkspur, San Anselmo, Mill Valley																					
Redwood High	High, 9-12	1,604	25%	54%	8%	7%	0%	16%	10%	60%	51	2	16	113, 119	NA	125	214	69%	NA	NA	NA	NA
San Andreas High	High, 10-12	68	56%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	3	0	NA	113, 119	NA	86	98%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sir Francis Drake High	High, 9-12	980	17%	66%	32%	7%	0%	18%	6%	34%	71	1	14	125	23, 68, 126	36	94	94%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tamalpais High	High, 9-12	1,281	26%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	3	8	115	17, 61	31	145	99%	1	2	Contracted	Data Unavailable
Tamiscal High (Alternative)	High, 9-12	106	25%	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	Data Unavailable	NA	3	10	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>TOTAL or AVERAGE</b>		<b>31,604</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>			<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,895</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>107</b>		<b>2,227</b>



## Private Schools

There are 41 private schools in Marin County serving preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and students with special needs. Approximately 7,000 students attend private school in Marin County. Private schools are not a primary focus of this study, but the potential to coordinate on new and existing services will be considered when developing recommendations. In Marin County, private schools tend to rely more on busing than public schools because they draw from a much larger catchment and some even come in from outside the County.

Transportation in the form of busing is typically included as part of tuition fees collected by the school. As a result, there are 14 private schools served by privately contracted yellow bus services. Only one school, Saint Hilary, relies on public transit services for its students and participates in Marin Transit's Youth Pass program. There are an additional 11 private schools in Marin County that participate in the Safe Routes to School program. Table 4 shows a summary of the private schools that provide bus services or participate in Safe Routes to School.

**Table 4: Private School Transportation Services**

School Name	Grades	Location	Bus Service Provided	Participates in Safe Routes
Brandeis Hillel Day School	K-8	San Rafael	X	
Branson School	High School	Ross	X	
Cascade Canyon School	K-8	Fairfax		X
Greenwood School	Pre K-8	Mill Valley	X	
Irene M. Hunt School of Marin	K-12	San Anselmo	X	
Lycee Francais La Perouse	K-5	Sausalito		X
Marin Academy	High School	San Rafael	X	
Marin Country Day School	K-8	Corte Madera	X	
Marin Horizon School	Pre K-8	Mill Valley	X	X
Marin Montessori School	K-9	Corte Madera	X	
Marin Primary & Middle school	Pre K-8	Larkspur	X	X
Mark Day School	K-8	San Rafael	X	
Mount Tamalpais School	K-8	Mill Valley	X	X
Oak Hill School	K-12	San Anselmo	X	
Our Lady of Loretto School	K-8	Novato		X
Ring Mountain Day School	K-8	Mill Valley	X	
Saint Anselm Elementary	K-8	San Anselmo		X
Saint Hilary Elementary	K-8	Tiburon	X	
Saint Patrick Elementary	K-8	Larkspur		X
Saint Rita Elementary	K-8	Fairfax		X
San Domenico Schools Programs	Pre K-12	San Anselmo	X	X

## Distance to School and Access

Home to school transportation needs and parent decisions are often made based on how far away the school is located and the level of safety associated with the commute. In Marin County, like many other areas in California, the school you send your child to is not simply the closest one to your home. There are many factors that determine how far away from your home you send your student including the type of education (public vs. private), the capacity and availability of public schools in your neighborhood, and school enrollment policies.

A significant number of students in Marin County attend private school. Private schools draw from a much larger catchment than traditional public schools and can even attract students from outside the County. Many private schools in Marin recognize the need for longer student commutes and build busing services into their daily program and fees.

Due to increasing enrollments and the historic closure or repurposing of many schools during times of declining enrollment and financial hardship, some school sites are now reaching capacity and no longer able to accept students that live in close proximity to schools. This has furthered the need for parents to evaluate their decision for school and ultimately choose a site that is much further away from the local public school. Enrollment policies and inter-district transfers are yet another factor in determining exactly how far a student needs to travel daily to access education.

A significant amount of geographic diversity can be found in students attending public schools. As mentioned above, there are a number of factors that influence and create differences in geographic student dispersion and ultimately how far a student must travel to access education. Table 5 shows a distribution of home-to-school distances by school. These percentages were determined using straight line buffers from the school site and adding the students that fall within these buffers. Actual student home origin was used for Districts that provided the data to the project team and residential parcels were used to estimate student distributions from Districts that did not provide this data. The mapping in Appendix A shows this distribution and separation spatially.

**Table 5: Student's Proximity to School**

School		Data Used	% ≤ .25 miles	% ≤ .5 miles	% ≤ 1 mile	% > 1 mile
<b>Dixie</b>	San Rafael					
<b>Dixie Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	12%	25%	48%	52%
<b>Mary E. Silveira Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	14%	38%	44%	56%
<b>Miller Creek Middle</b>	Middle, 6-8	Parcels	4%	16%	34%	66%
<b>Vallecito Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	9%	29%	80%	20%
<b>Kentfield</b>	Kentfield					
<b>Adaline E. Kent Middle</b>	Middle, 5-8	Parcels	3%	24%	57%	43%
<b>Anthony G. Bacich</b>	Elementary, K-4	Parcels	7%	24%	73%	27%
<b>Lagunitas Elementary</b>	San Geronimo Valley					
<b>Lagunitas Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-8	Parcels	3%	12%	34%	66%
<b>San Geronimo Valley</b>	Elementary, K-6	Parcels	3%	12%	30%	70%
<b>Larkspur-Corte Madera</b>	Larkspur, Corte Madera					
<b>Cove</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	15%	36%	66%	34%
<b>Hall Middle School</b>	Middle, 5-8	Parcels	2%	18%	61%	39%
<b>Neil Cummins</b>	Elementary, K-4	Parcels	10%	44%	79%	21%
<b>Mill Valley Elementary</b>	Mill Valley					
<b>Edna Maguire</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	9%	26%	53%	47%
<b>Mill Valley Middle</b>	Elementary, 6-8	Students	4%	12%	47%	53%
<b>Old Mill Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	12%	44%	86%	14%
<b>Park</b>	Elementary, P-5	Students	29%	68%	88%	12%
<b>Strawberry</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	9%	29%	52%	48%
<b>Tamalpais Valley</b>	Elementary, K-6	Students	5%	25%	61%	39%
<b>Novato Unified</b>	Novato					
<b>Hamilton Meadow Park</b>	Elementary, K-8	Parcels	5%	25%	59%	41%
<b>Loma Verde</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	9%	35%	65%	35%
<b>Lu Sutton</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	18%	53%	92%	8%
<b>Lynwood Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-6	Parcels	13%	45%	99%	1%

School		Data Used	% ≤ .25 miles	% ≤ .5 miles	% ≤ 1 mile	% > 1 mile
<b>Novato High</b>	High, 9-13	Parcels	3%	12%	31%	69%
<b>Olive Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	12%	26%	57%	43%
<b>Pleasant Valley Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-6	Parcels	9%	36%	88%	12%
<b>Rancho Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	10%	57%	100%	0%
<b>San Jose Intermediate</b>	Middle, 6-8	Parcels	3%	8%	36%	64%
<b>San Marin High</b>	High, 9-12	Parcels	2%	6%	26%	74%
<b>San Ramon</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	13%	29%	69%	31%
<b>Sinaloa Middle</b>	Middle, 6-8	Parcels	2%	10%	39%	61%
<b>Reed Union Elementary</b>	Tiburon, Belvedere, East Corte Madera					
<b>Bel Aire</b>	Elementary, 3-5	Students	10%	21%	35%	65%
<b>Del Mar Middle</b>	Middle, 6-8	Students	8%	15%	39%	61%
<b>Reed</b>	Elementary, K-2	Students	4%	15%	37%	63%
<b>Ross Elementary</b>	Ross					
<b>Ross Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-8	Parcels	16%	49%	94%	6%
<b>Ross Valley Elementary</b>	San Anselmo, Fairfax					
<b>Brookside Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	27%	63%	91%	9%
<b>Hidden Valley</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	5%	17%	56%	44%
<b>Manor Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	5%	29%	69%	31%
<b>Wade Thomas Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Students	24%	44%	91%	9%
<b>White Hill Middle</b>	Middle, 6-8	Students	2%	4%	12%	88%
<b>San Rafael City Elementary</b>	San Rafael					
<b>Bahia Vista Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	60%	97%	97%	3%
<b>Coleman Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	9%	34%	70%	30%
<b>Glenwood Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	9%	33%	79%	21%
<b>James B. Davidson Middle</b>	Middle, 6-8	Parcels	2%	8%	31%	69%
<b>Laurel Dell Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	22%	61%	96%	4%
<b>San Pedro Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	16%	42%	68%	32%

School		Data Used	% ≤ .25 miles	% ≤ .5 miles	% ≤ 1 mile	% > 1 mile
<b>Short Elementary</b>	Elementary, P-1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Sun Valley Elementary</b>	Elementary, K-5	Parcels	10%	31%	68%	32%
<b>Venetia Valley Elementary</b>	K-8	Parcels	11%	33%	82%	18%
<b>San Rafael City High</b>	San Rafael					
<b>Madrone High Continuation</b>	High, 9-12	Students	0%	2%	3%	97%
<b>San Rafael High</b>	High, 9-12	Students	3%	8%	55%	45%
<b>Terra Linda High</b>	High, 9-12	Students	2%	6%	21%	79%
<b>Sausalito Marin City</b>	Sausalito					
<b>Bayside MLK Jr. Academy</b>	K-8	Students <sup>1</sup>	60%	92%	96%	4%
<b>Tamalpais Union High</b>	Sausalito, Tiburon, Belvedere, Corte Madera, Larkspur, San Anselmo, Mill Valley, Fairfax, Ross, Kentfield					
<b>Redwood High</b>	High, 9-12	Parcels	1%	6%	28%	72%
<b>Sir Francis Drake High</b>	High, 9-12	Parcels	4%	16%	34%	66%
<b>Tamalpais High</b>	High, 9-12	Parcels	2%	8%	33%	67%

1. Student data used for Bayside MLK Jr. Academy was provided by school staff in discussions on 4/23/15. Actual percentages are estimates based on information that less than 10% of students live outside Marin City.

### Student Travel Data

As part of the Safe Routes to Schools Program, a comprehensive monitoring and program evaluation effort occurs on a frequent basis. The Safe Routes Programs identifies select schools to participate in an in-class survey that asks students how they get from home to school. The results below are from the 2014 spring semester and include 45 public and private schools. The results are collected as percentages of total students for each mode and are an average of home to school and school to home. A summary of average mode split by school type is provided in Table 6.

The term “Green Trips” refers to the total of all modes, except being driven in a family vehicle that is not a carpool. Overall, green trip types account for 50% of the mode share. Walking is the most common type of Green Trip (18%), followed by carpool (12%), bus (9.4%), bike (6.7%), transit (2.8%), and other (1.5%). Middle schools have the highest average Green Trip rate (65.9%) with relatively even rates for biking, bus, transit, and carpool usage. High schools have the highest rate for carpooling and K-8 schools show the highest rate for bus usage.

Evaluating the mode split data by school type reflects the impact of school location within the community and enrollment boundaries that are shown in the maps on Appendix A. Elementary schools show the highest rates

of walking (23%) which reflects the close proximity of these schools to the student's home. Middle schools show the highest rates of biking, which reflects a slightly longer distance away from the student's home but still a feasible trip without an automobile. The high usage of transit and carpool at the High School level reflect an even greater distance from the student's home to the school site. Finally, the private schools that draw from a much larger catchment rely most heavily on bus, carpool, and family vehicles. It should be noted that these observations are drawn on a somewhat limited sample of schools (just over 60% of public school participate and only two of the 10 public high schools) and individual behavior varies considerable from school to school.

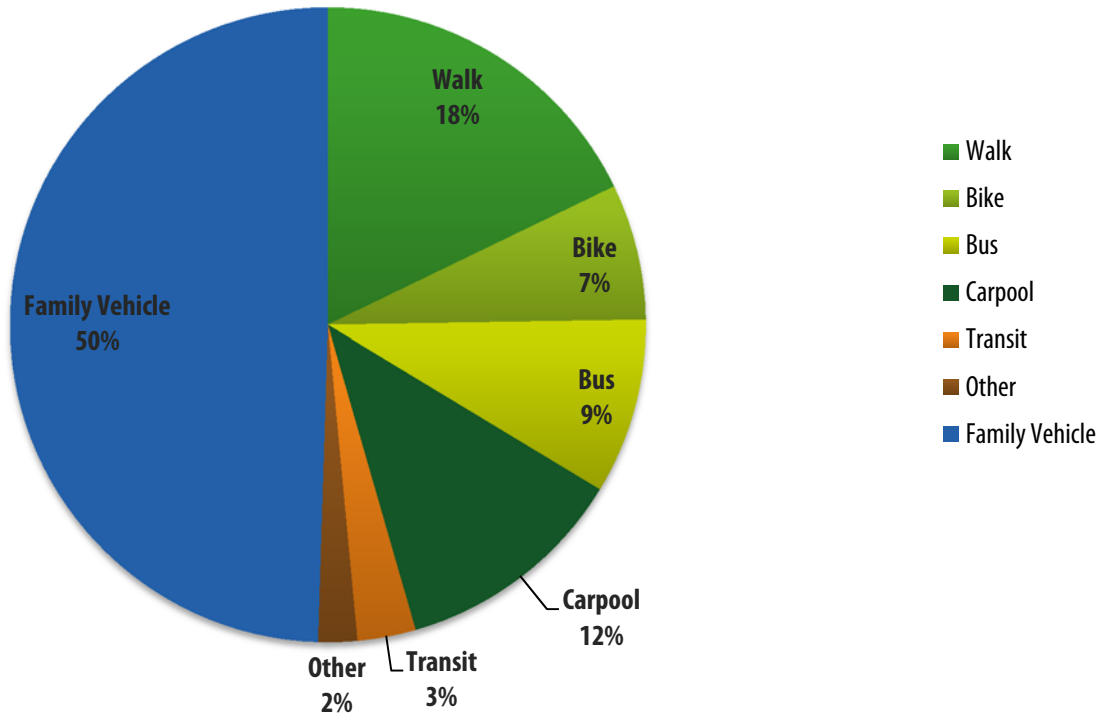
The Green Trip rate for public schools ranges from 30% to 77%. All three public schools with Green Trip rates above 70% are middle schools. The other school with an above 70% Green Trip rate is a private school with 48% of students riding yellow bus. All of the schools with low Green Trip rates are elementary or K-8 schools.

**Table 6: Marin County Student Home to School Mode Split by School Type**

Type	Count <sup>1</sup>	Walk	Bike	Bus	Transit	Carpool	Other	Family Vehicle	Green Trips
Elementary	23	23.0%	6.5%	7.0%	.4%	11.2%	1.6%	50.4%	<b>38.1%</b>
Middle	8	18.1%	13.4%	9.3%	10.3%	13.3%	1.6%	34.7%	<b>65.9%</b>
K-8	3	11.3%	2.8%	17.5%	0.4%	9.0%	0.9%	58.2%	<b>31.4%</b>
High	2	20.0%	7.0%	0%	7.8%	17.0%	4.3%	46.8%	<b>56.0%</b>
Private	9	5.6%	1.8%	15.8%	1.8%	13.2%	0.6%	61.2%	<b>31.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>49.9%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>

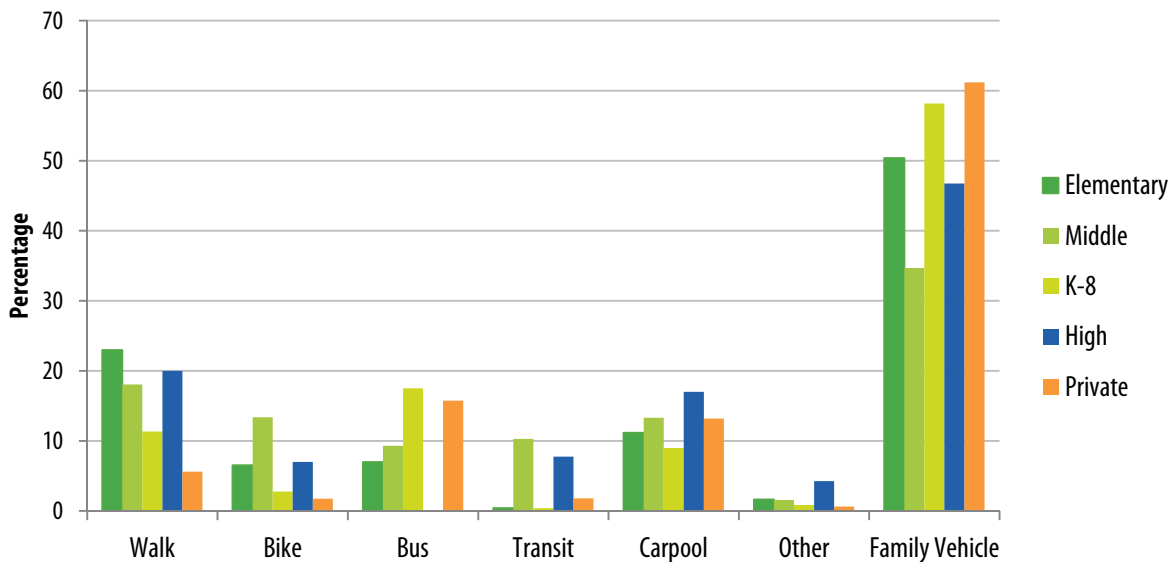
1. Count indicates the number of schools included in the survey

**Figure 5: Marin County Student Home to School Mode Split**



*Source: In-class survey of students administered by the Safe Routes to Schools program in 2013/14*

**Figure 6: Marin County Student Home to School Mode Split by School Type**



*Source: In-class survey of students administered by the Safe Routes to Schools program in 2013/14*

Appendix A includes home-to-school travel data for all public schools that participated in the 2013-14 annual survey. Table 7 shows the top five schools with the highest mode split percentages in all “green trip” categories.

**Table 7: Top 5 Schools in Each "Green Trip" Category**

Rating	Walk	Bike	Yellow Bus	Transit	Carpool	Overall Green Trips*
#1	Bahia Vista ES (San Rafael) 60%	Hall MS (Larkspur) 25%	Short ES (San Rafael) 51%	White Hill MS (Fairfax) 58%	San Jose MS (Novato) 29%	White Hill MS (Fairfax) 78%
#2	Park ES (Mill Valley) 51%	Mill Valley MS (Mill Valley) 24%	Laurel Dell ES (San Rafael) 33%	Redwood HS (Larkspur) 10%	S.F. Drake HS (San Anselmo) 18%	Miller Creek MS (San Rafael) 76%
#3	Old Mill ES (Mill Valley) 37%	Manor ES (Fairfax) 16%	Miller Creek MS (San Rafael) 27%	Hall MS (Larkspur) 8%	Edna Mcguire ES (Mill Valley) 17%	Hall MS (Larkspur) 71%
#4	Brookside ES (San Anselmo) 35%	Ross ES (Ross) Neil Cummins ES (Corte Madera)	Venetia Valley K-8 (San Rafael) 26%	San Jose MS (Novato) 8%	Davidson MS (San Rafael) 17%	Short ES (San Rafael) 68%
#5	S.F. Drake HS (San Anselmo) 32%	Del Mar MS (Tiburon) (tie) 15%	Davidson MS (San Rafael) 26%	S.F. Drake HS (San Anselmo) 6%	Rancho ES (Novato) 17%	Bahia Vista ES (San Rafael) 68%
Overall Average	20%	8%	8%	3%	12%	51%

\*Overall Green Trips is an average of the green trip rates for the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters

Similar trends are shown in the top performing schools as those noted by school type above, which include;

- Four of the five top schools for walking are elementary schools.
- All of the top biking schools are either middle schools or elementary schools, with middle schools holding the top two spots.
- All top yellow bus schools are elementary or middle schools and located in San Rafael.
- All top transit schools are middle school or high schools.
- The top three rated schools for overall green trips are middle schools

Schools that have high percentages of non-“green trips” are those where students indicate they get to school using a family vehicle. Table 8 shows a summary of the top 10 schools based on estimated total family vehicle trips. These estimates were calculated by taking current enrollment numbers and multiplying by the family vehicle mode share percentages. Interestingly, there is a diverse showing of school types and locations. The top school, Redwood High School, generates over twice as many of these trips as the number two school. It should



be noted that the schools included in Table 7 represent sites that have the largest contribution to traffic or possibly congestion, not necessarily the lowest “green trip” rates.

**Table 8: Top 10 Schools with the Highest Count of Students who Use a Family Vehicle to Get to School**

School	Type	Location	Family Vehicle Mode Share %	Estimated # of Students who use a Family Vehicle
Redwood	High	Larkspur	60%	954
Hamilton	K-8	Novato	61%	444
Neil Cummins	Elementary	Corte Madera	45%	420
Venetia Valley	K-8	San Rafael	55%	398
Davidson	Middle	San Rafael	35%	358
Reed	Elementary	Tiburon	66%	357
Mill Valley	Middle	Mill Valley	34%	347
Bacich	Elementary	Kentfield	48%	336
San Jose	Middle	Novato	47%	333
Sir Francis Drake	High	San Anselmo	34%	333

# Public Transit and Yellow Bus Services

School transportation in Marin County, like much of the rest of California, has evolved significantly since the adoption of the Proposition 13 spending limits and continuing demographic trends away from bus ridership. The substantial financial commitment required to operate and manage a full service school transportation program has resulted in many districts seeking a full range of alternatives to provide student access to school. These have included expanded use of the offering presented by Marin Transit, shared use of contractual mechanisms such as that used by Marin Pupil Transportation Authority, fee for service offerings, and active promotion of alternatives such as SR2S. Consequently, the school transportation landscape in Marin County is best characterized as diverse and highly focused on localized requirements.

Table 9 below shows a summary of ridership for the public transit and yellow bus services serving public schools in Marin County. An additional 15 private schools provide yellow bus service in Marin County but data on ridership was unavailable for this study.

**Table 9: Ridership Levels on Current Transit and Yellow Bus Services**

Type	Provider	Annual Ridership	Average Daily Ridership
Public Transit	Marin Transit, through Contractors	300,819	1,671
Yellow Bus – Home to School	School Districts, Directly or through Contractor	461,880	2,566
<b>Total</b>		<b>762,699</b>	<b>4,237</b>

*Source: Yellow Bus data estimated using individual district reporting and 2011-12 TRAN data CDE and data provided by school district*

The following section describes three types of home to school bus or transit transportation services in Marin County, including Marin Transit supplemental routes, Yellow Bus services for regular home to school transportation, and private school transportation services. Services for special needs students are not included in the scope of this effort and therefore not included in the assessment.

## Public Transit - Marin Transit

Marin Transit operates both fixed route transit and demand response services within Marin County. The fixed route operation serves both urban and rural portions of Marin County and includes “deviated fixed route” services called the West Marin Stagecoach, which connects the rural and urban portions of the county. Marin Transit’s fixed route operation consists of 27 routes with over 50 peak vehicles. The vehicles range in size from full-size transit coaches to smaller body-on-chassis (cut-a-way) vehicles. Many routes operate seven days per week. Marin Transit contracts for all its services with public and private providers and does not own any facilities nor employ its own operating personnel. Contractors include Golden Gate Transit, Marin Airporter,

MV Transportation, and the Senior Coordinating Council (Whistlestop Wheels), for local bus and paratransit services.

Marin Transit operates 27 routes, including 11 supplemental school routes that are designed to add additional capacity to the transit network on school days. These supplemental services are generally standalone services that are aligned with school bell times and operate Monday to Friday during the school year. One additional regular local fixed-route includes a series of supplemental trips that operate school days only. Currently, MV Transit operates most of the supplemental school services under its Marin Transit contract. Golden Gate Transit, under contract to Marin Transit, continues to operate services in Ross Valley and Larkspur-Corte Madera but will conclude operation of this service in June of 2015 and those services will transition to other Marin Transit contractors. Table 11 lists all Marin Transit routes that serve schools. Schools that are served by routes timed to school schedules are bolded. Regular local fixed-route numbers have two digits and school tripper route numbers have three digits and begin with a “1”.

In FY 2013/14, Marin Transit provided over 300,000 individual school-based rides at an average of 33 passengers per trip. Table 10 below shows annual operating statistics for all Marin Transit fixed routes vs. the supplemental school routes alone. Table 12 shows performance statistics for individual tripper routes for FY 2013/14. Route 145 is not included, because it began operation August 2014.

**Table 10: Marin Transit Annual Operating Statistics - FY 2013/14**

	All Fixed Routes	Supplemental School Transportation*	School % of All Fixed Routes
Riders	3,387,925	300,819	3%
Revenue Hours	147,111	5,047	6%
Passenger Revenue	\$3,759,572	\$232,588	3%
Operating Costs	\$18,605,043	\$571,725	6%
Riders/Revenue Hour (Trip)	23.03	59.60 (33)	259%
Operating Cost/Revenue Hour	\$126.47	\$113.28	90%

**Source:** Summary for FY 2013-14.

\*Includes supplemental tripper services operated as part of Route 17, 23, or 45.

**Table 11: Marin Routes Serving Schools**

Route #	Schools Served*	% of Ridership Youth
17	Mill Valley Middle, Tamalpais High, Willow Creek	20%
22	Neil Cummins	17%
23	Sir Francis Drake High, <b>White Hill Middle</b> , San Rafael High	32%
29	San Rafael High, Marin Catholic	23%
35	San Rafael High	22%
36	San Rafael High	26%
45K	Terra Linda High	29%
61	Tamalpais High, Mill Valley Middle	27%
68	Sir Francis Drake High, White Hill	26%
71	<i>None directly</i>	18%
113	<b>Redwood High</b> , San Andreas High, Cove School	98%
115	Del Mar, <b>St. Hilary's, Willow Creek Academy, Tamalpais High</b> , Mill Valley Middle	86%
117	<b>Hall Middle</b> , Neil Cummins, <b>Cove School</b>	96%
119	Del Mar, <b>Redwood High</b> , St. Hilary's, San Andreas High	85%
125	<b>Sir Francis Drake High</b>	98%
126	Brookside, <b>Hidden Valley</b> , Sir Francis Drake High	83%
127	<b>White Hill Middle</b> , Brookside, Hidden Valley	90%
139	<b>Terra Linda High</b>	62%
145	<b>Terra Linda High</b>	na
151	Novato High, <b>San Jose Middle, San Marin High</b>	90%
154	San Marin High, <b>Sinaloa Middle</b>	84%
219	Del Mar	16%
233	Venetia Valley, San Rafael High	24%
251	Novato High, San Jose Middle, San Marin High	30%
257	Miller Creek Middle	19%
259	Novato High,	27%

**Source:** Marin Transit FY2014 Data

\* Schools that are served by tripper routes timed to school schedules are bolded.

**Table 12: Marin Transit Individual Tripper Operating Statistics - FY 2013/14**

Route	Passengers	Revenue Hours	Operating Costs <sup>1</sup>	Fare Revenue <sup>2</sup>	Pass. Per Trip	Subsidy Per Pass.	Farebox Recovery
113	13,521	165	\$19,898	\$11,663	37.6	\$0.61	58.7%
115	13,524	468	\$49,678	\$5,797	25.0	\$3.24	11.7%
117	34,496	341	\$40,194	\$38,101	43.5	\$0.06	94.8%
119	27,987	526	\$68,252	\$24,779	25.9	\$1.55	36.3%
125	7,189	90	\$12,676	\$6,534	40.8	\$0.85	51.5%
126	8,363	316	\$39,228	\$5,522	13.7	\$4.04	14.1%
127	36,079	576	\$75,248	\$34,426	28.6	\$1.10	45.7%
139	4,026	227	\$22,106	\$2,322	11.2	\$4.91	10.5%
151	39,537	797	\$61,670	\$14,927	47.8	\$1.18	24.2%
154	12,138	318	\$23,475	\$6,959	33.7	\$1.36	29.6%
17 <sup>3</sup>	7,061	93	\$12,110	\$2,497	30.6	\$1.36	20.6%
23 <sup>3</sup>	87,492	1,060	\$138,023	\$76,302	34.8	\$0.71	55.3%
45 <sup>3</sup>	9,406	70	\$9,167	\$2,759	53.4	\$0.68	30.1%

**Source:** System Performance Summary for FY 2013-14

**Notes:**

1. Operating Costs include purchased transportation, fuel, and administrative costs
2. Fare revenues assigned to each include farebox revenue generated on that routes plus youth pass sales from students using the route.
3. Data shown is specific to only the trips that operate school days only. Effective August 2014, supplemental trips operated under Route 17 were moved to Route 115 and supplemental trips operated under Route 45 where moved to Route 145.

*Youth Pass Program*

Marin Transit offers a six-month or annual Youth Pass that is distributed through participating Marin County schools. With a Youth Pass, registered Marin County students and youth age 18 and under are able to ride on any Marin Transit local route without paying any additional fare. The passes are in the form of stickers that are affixed to the students' school ID cards. A staff member at each school is responsible for coordinating distribution of the passes. The Youth Pass costs \$175 per six-month period or \$325 for a year. Students from income-qualified households are eligible for free Youth Passes.

In fiscal year 2013/14, 24 public schools distributed the equivalent of 3,334 six-month Youth Passes to students. Of these, 91% were provided at no cost to income-qualified students by Marin Transit. The schools that participated in the Youth Pass program in 2013/14 are listed in Table 13 below with counts of free, paid, and total six-month passes distributed.

**Table 13: Youth Pass Distribution by School - FY 2013/14**

School	District	Free	Paid	Total Passes
San Rafael High School	San Rafael City Schools	884	2	<b>886</b>
Terra Linda High School	San Rafael City Schools	288	0	<b>288</b>
Hall Middle School	Larkspur-Corte Madera	108	170	<b>278</b>
Redwood High School	Tamalpais Union	148	66	<b>214</b>
San Jose Middle School	Novato Unified	190	3	<b>193</b>
White Hill School	Ross Valley	114	63	<b>177</b>
Willow Creek School	Sausalito Marin City	174	0	<b>174</b>
Davidson Middle School	San Rafael City Schools	162	0	<b>162</b>
Phoenix Academy	Marin County Education	160	0	<b>160</b>
San Marin High School	Novato Unified	156	4	<b>160</b>
Tamalpais High School	Tamalpais Union	144	1	<b>145</b>
Venetia Valley School	San Rafael City Schools	96	0	<b>96</b>
Sir Francis Drake High School	Tamalpais Union	88	6	<b>94</b>
San Andreas School	Tamalpais Union	84	2	<b>86</b>
Madrone High School	San Rafael City Schools	84	0	<b>84</b>
Marin Oaks	Novato Unified	62	0	<b>62</b>
Mill Valley Middle School	Mill Valley	32	0	<b>32</b>
Lynwood School	Novato Unified	16	0	<b>16</b>
Hidden Valley School	Ross Valley	16	0	<b>16</b>
Del Mar Middle School	Reed Union	8	0	<b>8</b>
Lu Sutton School	Novato Unified	4	0	<b>4</b>
San Ramon Elementary School	Novato Unified	4	0	<b>4</b>
Rancho Elementary School	Novato Unified	2	0	<b>2</b>
Manor Elementary	Ross Valley	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,026</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>3,343</b>

*Regulatory and Legal Considerations*

According to Marin Transit’s enabling legislation (1964), the agency has the ability to operate pupil transportation as well as to operate services in-house.<sup>4</sup> While a licensed attorney has not reviewed this legislation (and any subsequent legislation), the provisions seem clear and would appear to be typical. However, a more rigorous review is recommended.

The main legal consideration facing Marin Transit with respect to providing school transportation is related to its federal funding. As a Federal Transit Administration grantee, Marin Transit is governed by 49 CFR Part 605 “School Bus Operations.” The basic requirement is:

*Grantees are prohibited from providing exclusive school bus service unless the service qualifies and is approved by the FTA Administrator under an allowable exemption. Federally funded equipment or facilities cannot be used to provide exclusive school bus service. School tripper service that operates and looks like all other regular service is allowed.<sup>5</sup>*

There is local precedent to operate school bus services as school trippers such as Marin Transit’s supplemental school services. The key issue in successfully navigating the school bus regulation is the avoidance of exclusivity. As long as the service (including bus stops) is accessible to the general public, then the transit operator can walk the tight rope associated with these regulations. Further, if FTA funded capital facilities and vehicles are not used in school service, then this would further insulate Marin Transit from running counter to the regulation.

*Yellow Bus – School Districts*

Two school districts in the urbanized area of Marin County provide home to school yellow bus service in-house and three districts provide contracted yellow bus service through First Student, Inc. These services are summarized below and in each of the school district profiles in Appendix A. The costs associated with providing these services are discussed in Financial Analysis chapter of this report.

**Dixie Elementary (in-house).** The Dixie Elementary School District in San Rafael serves three elementary schools and one middle school with eight buses serving 10 routes. In 2013/14, they transported an average of 335 students per day and operated a total of 33,440 annual miles. In order to be eligible for bus service students must live farther than one mile from school for grades kindergarten to 5 and more than 2.5 miles from school for grades 6 to 8.

Passes are priced by semester, by trip (AM vs PM), and by number of children in the same family purchasing the pass. For example, a family with only one child on the bus will pay \$225 per semester or \$399 per year for a roundtrip and \$225 for an annual one-way. This pricing is reduced by approximately 7% as the number of

<sup>4</sup> Marin County Transit District Act of 1964, sections 70005 and 70075.

<sup>5</sup> FY2014 Triennial Review Workshop Workbook, Federal Transit Administration, page 14-1.

children per family increases until you reach four children and then the pass becomes free. Reduced pricing of approximately 50% is also available to students that qualify for free or reduced lunch. One-way ticket books with 25 rides can also be purchased for \$50.

See the Dixie School District profile in Appendix A for more information about the service.

**Lagunitas Elementary (in-house).** The Lagunitas School District in San Geronimo owns one bus and transports about 65 students to its consolidated school site each day, which is approximately one-third of the district population. The District provides this service free of charge to students.

**Reed Union Elementary (contracted).** The Reed Union Elementary school district in Tiburon serves three schools with four buses, running three trips in the AM and four trips in the PM. They transport an average of 367 students in the morning and 390 in the afternoon.

Each student pays approximately \$440 for each AM and PM annual pass. If a student wants to use the bus in both AM and PM hours, the total cost is approximately \$880 per student. Eligibility for a seat is based on first-come first served. The District also offers free or reduced transportation to those students that demonstrate need. The District also offers daily passes at a cost of \$4.00 each if seating space is available.

**San Rafael City Elementary (contracted).** San Rafael City Elementary School District in San Rafael serves approximately 1,600 students with 10 buses. All K-8 schools except Bahia Vista have at least one route serving the school with the majority of passengers originating in the Canal neighborhood and traveling to San Pedro, Sun Valley, Davidson, and Venetia Valley schools.

Pricing is done by semester and based on the number of children per family and the number of passes purchased. For example, a family with only one child using the bus will pay \$475 per year but a family with four or more children on the bus will pay an additional \$60 for each at or beyond this limit. Students on reduced lunch programs pay \$285 per year and students on the free lunch program pay only a \$60 processing fee.

**Tamalpais Union High (contracted).** The School District provides one morning and one afternoon bus route to transport students living in western Marin County to Tamalpais High in Mill Valley. The service is provided for at no cost to students.

In addition to the public schools in Marin County, approximately 17 private schools provide some form of home to school bus transportation for their students. Six schools provide transportation service in-house and the rest contract through First Student, Inc. or Michaels Transportation. The schools that provide transportation and their locations are listed in Table 4. These schools are also shown on the maps in Appendix A.



# Safe Routes to Schools Overview

The Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) program in Marin County is an award winning program designed to reduce school related congestion, while at the same time instilling healthy eating habits in children and creating a safer and cleaner environment for all. It does this through classroom education, special events, infrastructure improvements and other strategies that aim to increase the number of non-motorized and higher occupancy trips to and from schools. The program is administered by the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) and is funded by the local Measure A Transportation Tax passed in 2004 and the Measure B Vehicle Registration Fee.

## Background

Safe Routes to Schools in Marin County, California, is a model program that has been studied, and replicated by communities across the United States. In 2000, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration set out to determine if a program like SR2S would increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school and increase their safety. Marin County and Arlington, Massachusetts were chosen as pilot communities. After two years, the pilot project in Marin reported a 17% increase in the number of children walking or biking to school and a 24% decrease in the number of children being driven. Because of the success of that pilot project, Congress created a national SR2S program with the passage of SAFETEA-LU in 2005.

In Marin, the program has been financed through two dedicated funding sources: Measure A and Measure B. When Measure A was passed in 2004, the SR2S program became the first program in the United States to have a reliable, local source of funding. This allows for long term planning and program development, whereas most SR2S programs are working in one-year cycles, completely dependent upon successful grant applications.

## Safe Routes to Schools Programs in Marin County

The Transportation Authority of Marin's SR2S program uses the "5 E'S model" which is promoted and used nationally. That includes: education, encouragement, evaluation, enforcement and engineering. The Five E's model is now used nationally, particularly because of Marin County's success in SR2S. The Safe Routes to Schools programs promote:

- Walking and bicycling to school, and encourages carpooling and taking transit for longer trips
- Planning safer walking and bicycling routes to school
- Funding the construction of safe pathways to school
- Providing crossing guards at major intersections

The SR2S Education and Encouragement program offers events, contests and promotional materials to encourage children (and parents) to walk and bicycle. In addition, the program provides classroom lessons to teach children the necessary skills to navigate through busy streets and to persuade them to be active participants in the program. Typically about 50 schools participate in the Education and Encouragement

programs on an annual basis. TAM has recently added a new program specifically designed to help to organize disadvantaged communities especially in the Spanish speaking neighborhoods.

The program's Engineering and Enforcement element assists schools and communities in planning safer walking and bicycling routes to and from school. This element of the program is focused on working with stakeholders to develop engineering and enforcement actions needed for safer access to schools. It also supports SchoolPool Marin, a program aimed at establishing walking-, biking-, and car-pools among neighbors through use of neighborhood and route maps; 14 schools currently participate in SchoolPool.

### Safe Pathways

Safe Pathways is the capital improvement element of the SR2S program. This element of the program provides funding for the engineering, environmental clearance, and construction of pathway and sidewalk improvements, including safety improvements at street crossings. To date over \$20 million in walking and bicycling infrastructure has been constructed.

### Crossing Guards

The Crossing Guard program provides trained crossing guards at 80 intersections throughout Marin County. Use of crossing guards can reduce the reluctance parents may have in allowing their children to walk or bicycle to school. Crossing guard locations are prioritized based upon proven criteria. A recent survey found that more than 70% of students who walk or bike to school often use at least one crosswalk where there is a crossing guard and about one-sixth of students who walk or bike to school often changed from being driven to school in a car to walking or biking partly due to the presence of crossing guards

### Task Force Committees

The numerous Safe Routes to School Task Forces bring together school district staff and parent volunteers from district schools with public agency representatives including public works, traffic officers and councilmembers. Other attendees can include walking or cycling advocates, neighbors and local businesses. Together they identify safety issues and walking/cycling barriers for each school and develop a travel plan to prioritize and address those issues. The plans include infrastructure and enforcement strategies from the jurisdictions and education and encouragement strategies from the schools. The Task Force then continues to work together to implement that plan, monitor it, and support Safe Routes.

### Route Mapping

The Safe Routes to School program is currently developing route maps for schools to identify the suggested routes for walking and cycling to school. The mapping process involves collaboration and teamwork between school administration, parents, students, and city/town representatives, including police and public works. The maps include identifying bus service, when applicable. The maps illustrate the preferred walking and cycling routes to school, identify potential barriers, and are available for parents and students. This partnership has proven very productive in providing parents and students with complete transportation information.

## Policy Development

The Safe Routes to School program has worked with the Corte Madera/Larkspur, Novato, Mill Valley, Novato, and Ross Valley School Districts to create a model Safe Routes to Schools policy that reinforces the programs provided by Safe Routes such as affirming support for classes, conducting surveys, supporting team leaders and participation in Task Forces. It is currently working with the City of Fairfax to develop a model policy for cities and towns to adopt. Possible policy language could include but not be limited to: including Safe Routes Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Updates, prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian projects in Capital Improvement Plans, working with law enforcement to prioritize patrolling school routes during morning commute and dismissal times, ensuring the provision of crossing guards at crucial intersections, and identifying remote drop off locations.

## Disadvantaged Community Programs

TAM has made a commitment to reach out to disadvantaged schools in Marin City, Novato and San Rafael. Under the Safe Routes to School program, a bilingual volunteer coordinator has been successful in recruiting volunteers and assisting in setting up walking and bicycling programs. Safety issues have been discussed and educational classes have been held in the schools, including assisting Marin City in a bike giveaway with special instruction. Partnerships with the County Health Departments nutrition programs have been particularly successful in building a coalition to promote healthy eating and active living.

## Monitoring and Effectiveness

TAM regularly monitors the effectiveness of the Safe Routes to School program. The SR2S program continues to make a significant impact across the county, reducing car trips to and from schools and making a safer environment for all:

- In 2000, there were nine schools participating in Safe Routes to Schools; today, there are over 50 schools, representing over 23,500 students.
- Since the program began, there has been an eight percent mode shift countywide from single-student car trips to walking, bicycling, riding public transit, and carpooling to/from schools. Most of the shift has been toward walking and bicycling.
- Twenty-one schools have exceeded the countywide average since joining SR2S. Some schools have increased the number of green trips to/from their school by over 20 percent.
- According to recent parent surveys, over 25 percent of families changed their travel mode because of SR2S.
- Over 100 Safe Routes to Schools infrastructure projects totaling more than \$20 million have been constructed or are currently under design.
- Over 14 schools participate in SchoolPool Marin, and there is strong demand for more walking and bicycling route maps for schools throughout the County

- Marin's Crossing Guard program currently deploys trained school crossing guards at over 80 locations throughout the county.

A thorough program evaluation is planned again for 2015-2016.

Overall, the Safe Routes to School program continues to be successful in promoting and achieving walking and bicycling trips to school, with some influence on converting longer automobile trips to carpools or public transit. However, complementary County-wide school bus service could help achieve this later objective.

# Financial Overview

There are a number of stakeholders who participate in and oversee programs related to access to school and traffic mitigation. When analyzed individually, the resources dedicated to these services range from comparatively modest to significant. This range of investment includes the limited expenditures Lagunitas School District dedicates to yellow bus transportation through the hundreds of thousands of dollars provided by TAM and Marin Transit to support supplemental transit and SR2S programs. The following section highlights the expenditures and revenues associated with busing programs in Marin County.

## Busing Expenditures

Expenditures for home to school bus transportation programs are presented as ongoing operational cost and one-time capital expenditures. In addition to parents and users, a number of different agencies are currently supporting these costs through their revenue streams including the school districts and Marin Transit. A summary of expenditures is shown in Table 14. In total, nearly \$2 million is spent every year on public school busing and just under half of these expenses are paid for by users through fares and passes.

**Table 14: Annual Operating Expenditures**

Program	Lead Agency	Estimated Annual Cost of Operations	% of Cost Covered Directly by User
Yellow Bus	San Rafael Elementary School District	\$707,810 <sup>(1)</sup>	28%
Yellow Bus	Reed Unified School District	\$280,000 <sup>(2)</sup>	100%
Yellow Bus	Dixie School District	\$337,606 <sup>(3)</sup>	83%
Yellow Bus	Lagunitas School District	\$36,000 <sup>(4)</sup>	0%
Yellow Bus	TAM Union High School District	\$75,000 <sup>(5)</sup>	0%
Transit Bus	Marin Transit	\$571,721 <sup>(6)</sup>	41%
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,008,137</b>	<b>49%</b>

1. Based on San Rafael Elementary Schools September 22, 2014 Board meeting, Addendum #8 to contract between San Rafael City Schools and Laidlaw Transit Inc., D/B/A First Student Inc.
2. 2014-15 Budget, Object 5840 - provided by Reed Unified School District November 2014
3. Transportation Report: Ridership, Fleet Analysis and Financial Update for 2013/14, presented to the Dixie School Board on October 14, 2014
4. Estimated based on historic data reported to TRAN data, California Department of Education
5. Letter to parents dated July 2014 from Assistant Superintendent Lori Parrish
6. Marin Transit actual cost for operations and fuel FY2013-14 on all supplemental routes and trips that operate school days only.

## Fleet Capital Costs

In addition to annual operating costs, funds are identified for capital investments related to home to school bus transportation. These capital expenses associated with school transportation primarily include the costs of equipment (buses).

There are several vehicles that currently provide busing services in Marin County. Equipment used by the school districts and by contractors providing yellow bus service typically use a traditional yellow school bus (shown in Figure 7). These vehicles come in four basic configurations and are given Type A-Type D labels with seating capacity between 24-84 students. Federal and state laws regulate vehicles designed specific for transporting K-12 students to and from school. These regulation apply to the color and safety features and result in a vehicle that looks very consistent across manufactures. Many yellow bus providers have also installed camera GPS tracking systems to increase safety and accountability of the drivers and services. A typical price for conventional school bus is \$150,000 and have a useful life of 20 years.

Supplemental transit services provided by Marin Transit are provided using a bus with specifications to serve not just K-12 students but all members of the general public. The vehicle (shown in Figure 7) is branded to match the image of the Transit District and includes additional components such as rear doors, wheelchair lifts and ramps, fare boxes and Clipper transponders, bike racks, electronic digital front, side and rear head sign, automatic passenger counters, onboard cameras, and GPS devices that monitor vehicle location and provide real-time passenger information. The difference in vehicle type and the added onboard equipment create a price point over double the traditional school bus (\$350,000) with a useful life that's half a school bus. The price point gets further exaggerated to anywhere from \$600,000 - \$1 million if alternative propulsion systems are included (hybrid or electric), a decision the District has made on all new heavy-duty vehicle purchases since 2010.

**Figure 7: Typical Bus Types Used in Marin County School Transportation Services**



Typical School Bus



Typical Supplemental School Bus (Marin Transit)

Contracted yellow bus services in Marin County include the equipment (contractor provides) while district operated yellow bus and Marin Transit Supplemental services have additional capital expenditures related to equipment. Annualizing these costs provides a better assessment of the true costs to providing the service.

Table 15 shows a summary of these costs:

**Table 15: Capital Costs of Vehicles**

Vehicle Type	Propulsion	Typical Seated Capacity	Average Cost	Useful Life	Annualized Cost Per Bus
45' Yellow Bus	Diesel	84	\$150,000	20 years	\$7,500
40' Medium Duty Transit	Diesel	40	\$350,000	10 years	\$35,000
40' Heavy Duty Transit	Diesel	40	\$400,000	12 years	\$33,333
40' Transit	Diesel Hybrid	40	\$650,000	12 years	\$54,167

### Revenues

A number of different revenue streams fund the home to school transportation programs. Table 16 shows three major revenue sources (user fees, Measure A, Measure B) and the percentage of other agency funds that support service and program costs. User fees in the form of bus pass sales accounts for 49 % of all bus expenditures and 25 % of total expenditures. Measure A, the county's ½ cent sales tax, funds nearly \$2 million annually or 50% of all revenues supporting home to school transportation.

Other agency funds account for 22 % of the total revenues to support home to school transportation. Other Agency funds for yellow bus and transit services tend to be from the state or local property tax. While the state of California does have limited funds available for home-to-school Transportation, only basic-aid schools qualify to claim and allocations are frozen based on previous claims levels.

Other funds contributed to bus programs from school districts used for transportation services generally compete with educational programs. Districts have made policy decisions to financially support transportation programs because in many districts it can be extraordinarily difficult for students to attend school if transportation services are not provided. In the case of Marin Transit, funds used for school transportation directly compete with other local transit routes and services including senior and disabled services.

**Table 16: Revenues and Expenditures for Student Transportation Programs and Services**

Program	Lead Agency	Estimated Annual Cost of Operations	User Fees	Measure A	Other Funds
Yellow Bus	San Rafael Elementary School District	<b>\$707,810</b>	\$198,000 (28 %)	\$0 (0%)	\$509,810 (72 %)
Yellow Bus	Reed Unified School District	<b>\$280,000</b>	\$280,000 <sup>(2)</sup> (100 %)	\$0 (0%)	\$0 (0%)
Yellow Bus	Dixie School District	<b>\$337,606</b>	\$280,708 <sup>(3)</sup> (83 %)	\$0 (0%)	\$56,898 <sup>(3)</sup> (17 %)
Yellow Bus	Lagunitas School District	<b>\$36,000</b>	\$0 (0%)	\$0 (0%)	\$36,000 <sup>(4)</sup> (100%)
Yellow Bus	TAM Union High School District	<b>\$75,000</b>	\$0 (0%)	\$0 (0%)	\$75,000 <sup>(4)</sup> (100 %)
Transit Bus	Marin Transit	<b>\$571,721</b>	\$232,588 <sup>(5)</sup> (41 %)	\$135,653 <sup>(6)</sup> (23 %)	\$203,480 <sup>(7)</sup> (36 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,008,137</b>	<b>\$991,296</b> (49 %)	<b>\$135,653</b> (7 %)	<b>\$881,188</b> (44 %)

1. Estimate based on FY2013-14 sales
2. Assumes user pays 100% of bus transportation costs
3. Transportation Report: Ridership, Fleet Analysis and Financial Update for 2013/14, presented to the Dixie School Board on October 14, 2014
4. Assumes District pays 100% of costs
5. Includes revenues from farebox, Clipper and Youth Pass sales
6. System wide Measure A accounts for 40% of Marin Transit revenues. This estimate assumes a similar distribution for operating subsidy.
7. Other funds eligible for funding this service include TDA, STA, property tax, and discretionary grants



# Organizational Overview

Identifying how best to support the implementation of a broad-based access to school program requires consideration of existing organizational capacity and the potential need for an alternative structure to support the program. This begins with clearly identifying baseline requirements for managing and administering the program and then assessing the existing organizations against those criteria.

## Contracted Busing Services

Most of the yellow bus and public transit services operated in Marin County are provided under contract to private operators. This relationship requires an entity (School District or Marin Transit) to oversee the contractor, the program's budget, scheduling and routing, student and parent complaints, address behavior issues, and coordinate sales and distribution of fare media. At the School District, these responsibilities typically fall on the District Business Manager and their support staff or Administrative staff at the school site. At Marin Transit, these duties are done by the Planning Department in coordination with Administrative staff at the various school sites. In both cases, these duties are a small part of the employee's other duties.

The contracted model then leaves the contractor to operate and maintain the actual service to students. A Contract Manager oversees the drivers and mechanics and ensures that day-to-day operations are fulfilled. The current yellow bus contracts are specific to school service so contractor staff are dedicated to this operation. The Marin Transit contract includes much more than school service so responsibilities of contractor staff are shared with the other transit services.

## School District Operated Yellow Bus

The few yellow bus programs operated in-house in Marin County typically have a dedicated Transportation Manager that oversees the bulk of responsibilities related to home to school transportation. They hire and train drivers, develop routes and schedules, and fields student and parent complaints. Drivers and mechanics are direct hires of the District. The District Business Manager is involved in coordinating bus pass sales and distribution.

The in-house yellow bus model is perhaps the most streamlined operation because one person is dedicated to the program and is responsible for many elements of the program. The public transit model requires the most coordination since the services are planned by one agency and provided by another, and neither are directly associated with the school district. This requires additional coordination on such elements as bell schedules, calendars, youth pass sales, distribution (including qualifying free and reduced students), and follow-up on student behavior issues.

### Safe Routes to School

The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) oversees all elements of the Safe Routes to School program including the Education and Encouragement program, the Safe Pathways program, and the School Crossing Guards program. The program is managed for TAM by consultants and subconsultants that provide paid staff to support the various day-to-day elements of the program.

The Education and Encouragement program relies heavily on volunteer school coordinators to assist with the in class curriculum and staffing of events. Often times the availability of the Education and Encouragement programs are a function of parent volunteers.

The SchoolPool services are coordinated by the Program Manager and Program Staff but rely on the volunteer Neighborhood Captains to coordinate and match services.

The school crossing guards program is also overseen by TAM but the day to day is managed by a vendor. A program manager is responsible for hiring and training the crossing guards. They also coordinate with the schools to determine calendars and bell times. Paid crossing guards are hired to staff specific intersections around the County.

## Conclusion

Countywide, half of all students currently get to school using a “green trip” including walking, biking, yellow bus or transit, and carpooling. This travel behavior helps supports active living goals as well as congestion relief goals. However, congestion level continue to slow Marin County’s roadway and increasing this “green trip” travel behavior is one way to help.

There are a number of different programs that either encourage or directly provide transportation services in Marin County. Yellow school bus and supplemental public transit offerings are the only services that are available daily to directly transport students to and from school. Five of the 13 school districts included in the study provide some form of yellow bus services to their students. Another five districts are supported by supplemental public transit services. This leaves three districts; Kentfield, Mill Valley, and Ross, without any coordinated home to school bus services available to any of their schools.

Yellow bus services in Marin are provided at the discretion of the district and some offer financial subsidy for the program while others pass the bulk of the cost to the parents. Only two districts in the study area provide yellow bus service in-house while the other three districts contract. While differences in costs and organizational structure differ between these models, the most cost efficient operations are those that have found coordination between schools in bell schedules, allowing a single asset (vehicle) to be used to serve multiple schools and riders.

Supplemental public transit services offered by Marin Transit serve 13 schools in five districts across the County. A total of 24 schools supply transit youth bus passes to approximately 1,700 students across the County. Over 90% of these passes are distributed as free to students of low-income households. When compared to other local services provided by Marin Transit, these supplemental trips account for just 3% of total revenue hours and cost of service, but 9% of total riders. This creates a favorable productivity rating when measuring passengers per revenue hour. However, the “peaky” nature of the service (only one to two trips per day during the peak hours) creates challenges with fleet and staffing and leads to comparatively high operation costs. Even with grant funds offsetting the cost of vehicles, when compared to yellow bus operations, the total cost to provide supplemental services is significantly higher.

The exception to this is when the capital investment (vehicle) can be shared across other services. Currently Marin Transit uses the same fleet for some supplemental school services as it uses on the weekend shuttle service provided to Muir Woods. Spreading this investment cost over the two programs provides efficiency and reduces costs. However, the scalability of the supplemental program is largely dependent upon the fleet needs of the Muir Woods service. Current peak vehicle needs on the Muir Woods program is 10 vehicles, whereas the supplemental program is 24.

The Safe Routes to School programs are nationally recognized for their efforts and the results primarily of encouraging walking and biking to school. The Safe Routes programs cast a very large net in terms of participation (over  $\frac{3}{4}$  involved at some level), and encourages school bus and additional transit service for those student markets outside of the walking and biking range for school transportation.

Developing a coordinated program that increases “green trips” poses a number of challenges, including the large number of organizations that are involved in providing education and home to school transportation services, the financial constraints of each agency, and the prescribed intent of different revenue streams. Each school district is unique and the need for transportation differs based on factors such as school location, bell schedules, safety, and adjacent congestion levels. The plan will outline a framework to identify an appropriate set of school bus or transit service transportation programs that meets the needs of Marin County students and then develop a way to prioritize school bus and transit investment across the County.