



agenda

Subject: **Marin Transit Ad Hoc Committee on School Transportation**

Location: **Terrace Room**
Room 326, Marin Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael

Date: **Friday, May 6, 2016**

Time: **1:30 PM – 3:30 PM**

1. Purpose and Goals for the Ad Hoc Committee
2. Summary of Coordinated Countywide Student Transportation Study and Board Workshop (Attachment 1)
3. Status of School Service Today (oral report)
4. Financial Picture – near term and longer term (hand outs at meeting)
5. Next Steps and Future Ad Hoc Committee Meetings





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May 6, 2016

Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee
Marin County Transit District
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Countywide Student Transportation Study and Board Workshop Results

board of directors

Dear Board Members:

kathrin sears
president
supervisor district 3

katie rice
vice president
supervisor district 2

stephanie moulton-peters
2nd vice president
city of mill valley

judy arnold
director
supervisor district 5

maribeth bushey
director
city of san rafael

damon connolly
director
supervisor district 1

steve kinsey
director
supervisor district 4

BACKGROUND:

In partnership with the Marin County Office of Education and the Transportation Authority of Marin, Marin Transit initiated a study of student transportation in the summer of 2013. The focus of the study was to identify options to relieve roadway congestion, encourage healthy mobility options, and improve the coordination of resources dedicated to providing student access to schools. The study team met with a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of city and school representatives from across the county over the course of about 18 months, resulting in a broad range of input and perspectives on student transportation.

The Existing Conditions Assessment (available at http://www.marintransit.org/pdf/planning/050115_FINAL_MarinTransit_SchoolStudy_Task2.pdf), the study's first deliverable, showed a number of different entities are responsible for, or associated with, school transportation. Marin Transit's supplemental school routes and Youth Pass program, yellow bus service, Safe Routes to Schools program, and TAM's crossing guard program all contribute to student access to schools in Marin County. In total, more than \$4 million is spent annually on these programs.

The study identified school bus models and options, the potential demand for school busing for each of 55 public schools in the county, and costs and funding of school transportation service. On December 1, 2015 the Marin Transit Board of Directors held a workshop on school transportation to better understand the needs and how they might be addressed, and to understand key issues that affect Marin Transit. The Board provided comment and direction to staff that was included in the final study report and recommendations issued in December 2015. The final report is at

http://www.marintransit.org/pdf/planning/CCSTS_FINAL_123115.pdf.

Staff will be available at the May 6, 2016 meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee to summarize the study results presented at the Board Workshop, workshop comments, and the final report recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy E. Whelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'N'.

Nancy Whelan
General Manager

Attachment



Summary of Countywide Student Transportation Study and Board Workshop

Marin Transit Ad Hoc Committee on Student Transportation





May 6, 2016

COUNTYWIDE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION STUDY

- Study begins – Summer 2014
- Existing Conditions Report – May 2015
- Ross Valley School District yellow bus service begins – August 2015
- Reed School District yellow bus service begins – August 2015
- Board Workshop – December 2015
- Final Report – December 2015
- Reed and Mill Valley School Districts seek Marin Transit assistance managing yellow bus service – February 2016
- School Coordinator position posted – March 2016

School Bus Models

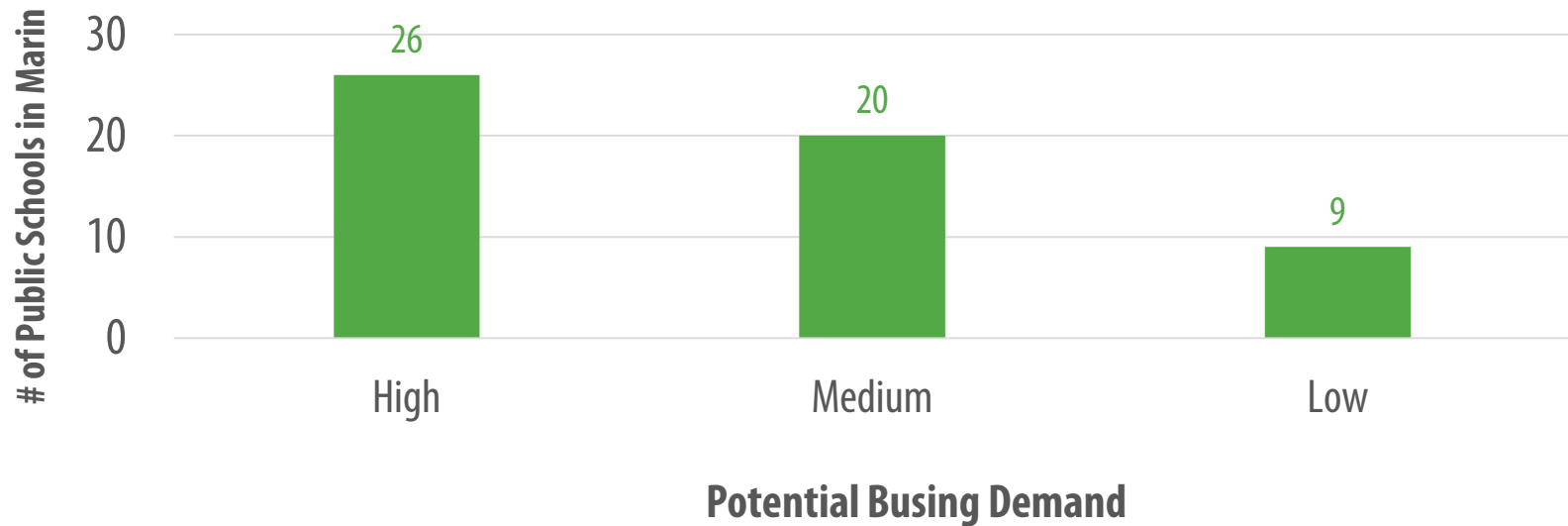


	 Yellow Bus	 Supplemental
Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed specifically for children High Capacity Low vehicle cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers opportunities to share with other public transit services – increased efficiencies
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging to share equipment across programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and federal regulation limit flexibility Service is not designed specifically for younger riders
Current Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most common form of home-to-school transportation 5 Districts + Marin Transit provide 2 (in-house), 4 (under contract) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marin Transit offers 9 routes serving 13 schools including all high schools, two middle schools, two elementary schools, and one private school At capacity, no ability to expand due to equipment
Future Applicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on elementary and middle schools  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on high schools 



No single organization is solely responsible for home to school transportation



Busing Demand Summary



- All high schools and most middle schools are “high” demand
- All “high” demand schools except those in Mill Valley and Kentfield School Districts have some level of bus service today

Demand Projections



	 Yellow Bus	 Supplemental	Total
Current Students	2,800	1,000	3,800
Potential New Students	+3,900	+700	+4,600
Total Students	6,700	1,700	8,400

Current Mode Split = **13%**, Potential Mode Split = **30%**



Yellow bus provides the best opportunity to increase “green trip” rates and mitigate traffic congestion



School bus service is costly to operate and requires a significant investment in capital

- Annual operating costs: \$6.8 – \$8.2 million
- Annualized capital costs: \$2.4 million
- **Annual total costs: ~ \$10 million**



There is no single, dedicated funding source for home-to-school bus transportation

- Potential Revenue Sources (high likelihood in Marin)
 - Statewide Home to School Transportation (LCFF Add-on funding)
 - City or School Contributions
 - Parcel Taxes (County, School, or JPA)
 - New Countywide Transportation Sales Tax

More Key Findings and Conclusions



- ! School transportation is expensive
- ! There is no organization that brings together yellow school bus, public transit service for schools, and the Safe Routes Program under one umbrella
- ! Congestion related to school traffic can not be quantified with current countywide model
- ! An estimated 4,600 new students would use the bus at high and medium need schools if service was available. Busing mode split could go from 13% to 30% of all students
- ! Transit subsidies available to support supplemental school routes and yellow school bus are currently less than \$500K per year or less than 7% of the estimated need
- ! Near term, funding for expansion will need to be pieced together from localized sources (city, districts, parents, etc.)
- ! Longer term, other subsidies will be needed to pursue expansion and encourage increased ridership

Supplemental Service Issues

- **Near Term:** Reallocate supplemental service to high schools
- **Longer Term:** Achieve growth in service

Yellow Bus Issues

- **Near Term:** Support (planning, funding, and oversight) of current programs and new requests
- **Longer Term:** Organization structure and dedicated funding

DECEMBER 2015 WORKSHOP RESULTS

Four Key Questions Discussed



- How do we reallocate supplemental resources to focus on high schools?
- How do we grow supplemental transit services to meet future demands of high school students?
- What is Marin Transit's role in supporting yellow bus programs countywide?
- What is Marin Transit's role in identifying a future organizational structure and dedicated funding for yellow bus?

- Include congestion relief in prioritizing investments in school bus service
 - Consider the needs of underserved communities and the transit dependent too
 - Develop the data and analytical tools to support additional funding
- Analyze equity of public investments, including existing funding
- Incentivize partnerships or require school districts to contribute funding for Marin Transit staff support and for school bus service
- Include private schools in future analysis
- Explore opportunities to share vehicles with school districts that are operating yellow buses

- Investigate potential for high schools to charge students for parking
- Prepare a marketing program to present success stories to School Districts and other potential partners to motivate/educate citizens to support expanded school bus programs
- Facility needs must be addressed with growing school service
- Consider potential new sources for near term and long term funding
- Develop a transition plan addressing:
 - Cost
 - Funding
 - Equity
 - Congestion relief
 - School district and community participation in funding and supporting service

- 1: Better align supplemental transit and yellow bus fares.
- 2: Develop a transition plan to better match service models to student needs.
- 3: Further evaluate service to schools that demonstrate a “high” demand for service based on the study’s preliminary analysis.
- 4: Further integrate bus offerings into current SR2S programs.
- 5: Further evaluate the recommendations for supplemental public transit service to ensure they are consistent with regulatory requirements.
- 6: Determine Marin Transit’s role in advancing or expanding yellow bus service.

- 1: Develop a forum to identify and develop an appropriate organizational structure, a detailed financial plan, cost-sharing options, and a timeline for the expanded yellow bus service.
- 2: Evaluate bus integration with other home-to-school busing, SR2S programs, and local public transit offerings.
- 3: Update the countywide travel demand model that allows congestion to be quantified and used in the assessment.