



# agenda

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

Location: **Marin County Civic Center, Room 324A (Rug Room)  
3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael**

Date: **Thursday September 15, 2016**

Time: **1:30 – 3:30 PM**

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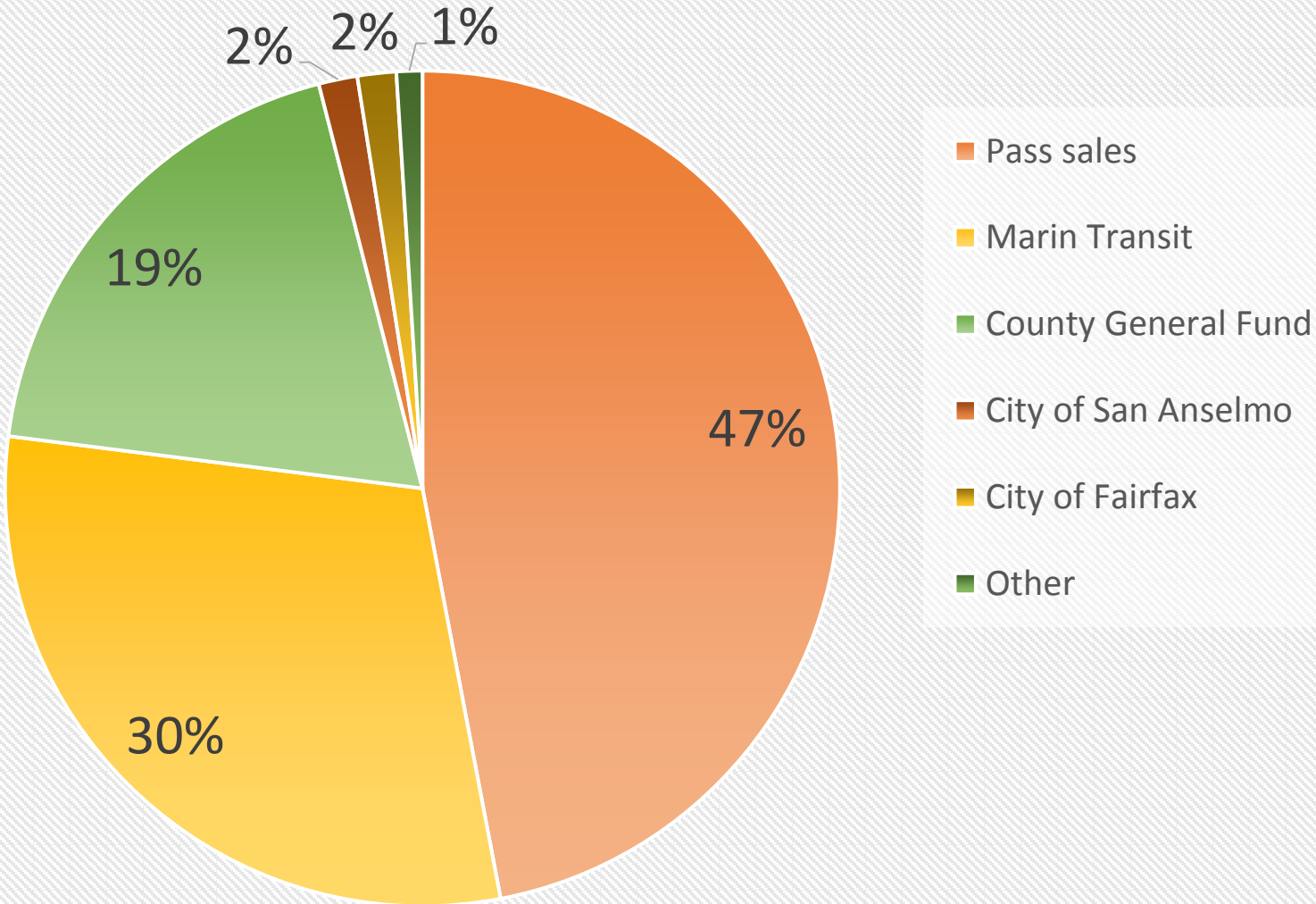
1. Summary of 2016-17 Yellow Bus Operations (Attachment 1)
2. Update on Parking and Facility Needs and Issues (Attachment 2)
3. Status of Ross Valley School District Pilot Project (Attachment 3)
4. Near Term Action Plan (Attachment 4 and Handout)
5. Next Steps



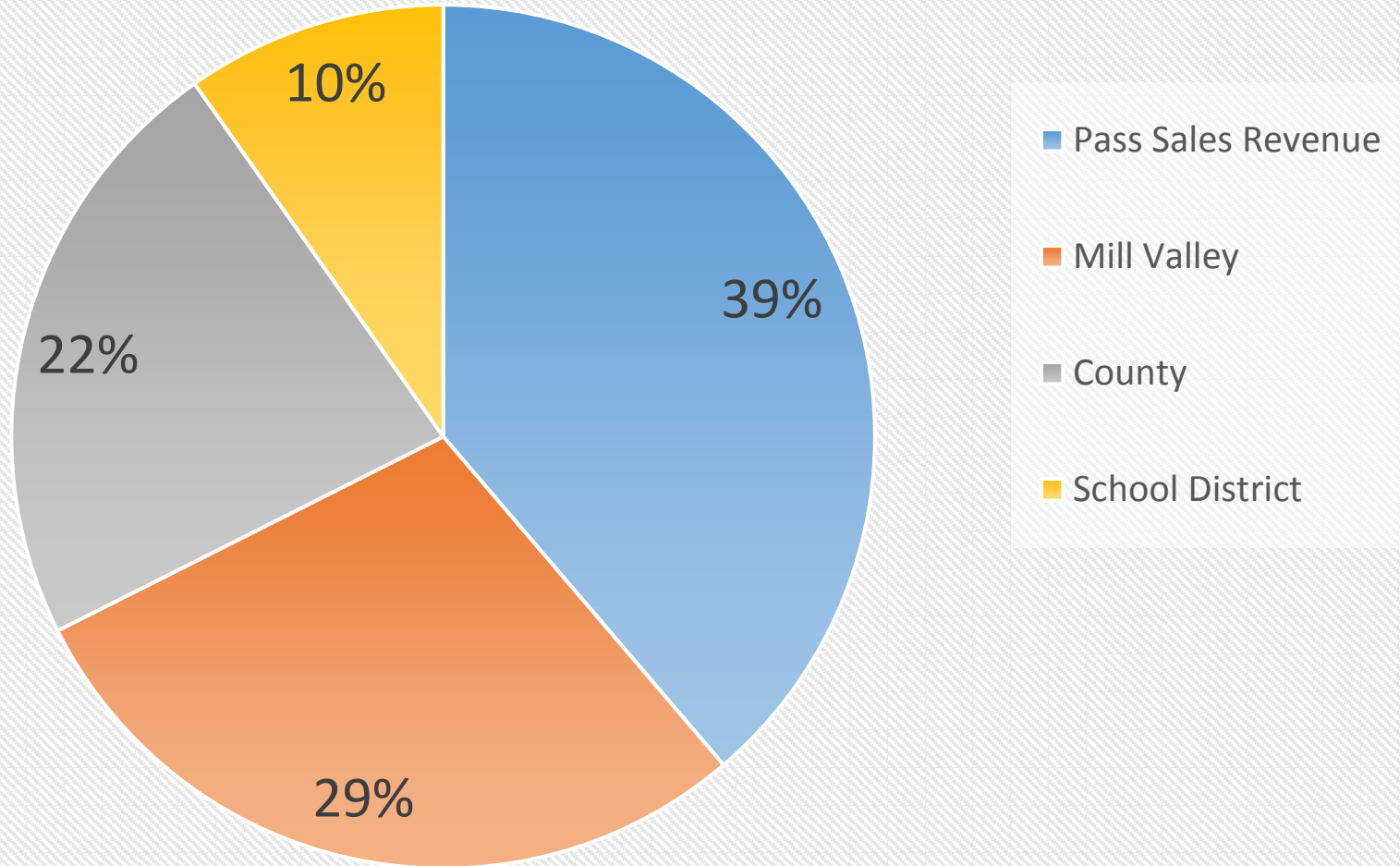
Attachment 1: Yellow School Bus Program Summary

		Mill Valley School District	Reed Union School District	Ross Valley School District
<b>Program Structure</b>				
	<b>Contract Type</b>	MVSD contract with Service Provider and MOU with Marin Transit for operations support	JPA contract with Service Provider and MOU with Marin Transit for operations support	Marin Transit contract with Service Provider and directly manages operations
	<b>Service Provider</b>	Michael's Transportation	First Student	Michael's Transportation
	<b>Program funding sources</b>	See page 2		
<b>Pass Sales and Pricing</b>				
	<b>Cost of Pass (Annual AM + PM)</b>	\$ 588.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 700.00
	<b>Total Sales (one-way passes)</b>	230	1,416	957
	<b>Waitlist</b>	None	19 one way passes	35 for PM only passes
<b>Operations</b>				
	<b>Number of Schools Served</b>	3	3	2
	<b>Number of Buses</b>	2	7	6
	<b>Number of Trips daily (Routes)</b>	6	25	17
	<b>Parking</b>	Edna Maguire School	1600 Los Gamos	1600 Los Gamos
<b>Technology</b>				
	<b>Bus tracking</b>	Syncromatics GPS tracking tablets for operations oversight (data not available to parents)	Syncromatics GPS tracking tablets for operations oversight; Find My Bus App for parents driven by data from Syncromatics GPS tracking tablets	Syncromatics GPS tracking tablets for operations oversight (data not available to parents)
	<b>Parent Service Alert Communication</b>	Mass texts and emails	Push notifications via App, mass texts, and emails	Mass texts and emails
<b>Feedback</b>				
	<b>Complaints</b>	Linden & Evergreen stop safety	On time performance for certain routes, parent smartphone app not accurate	Waitlist
	<b>Commendations</b>	Great bus drivers	More stable/predictable operations	Made changes to PM schedule to improve performance

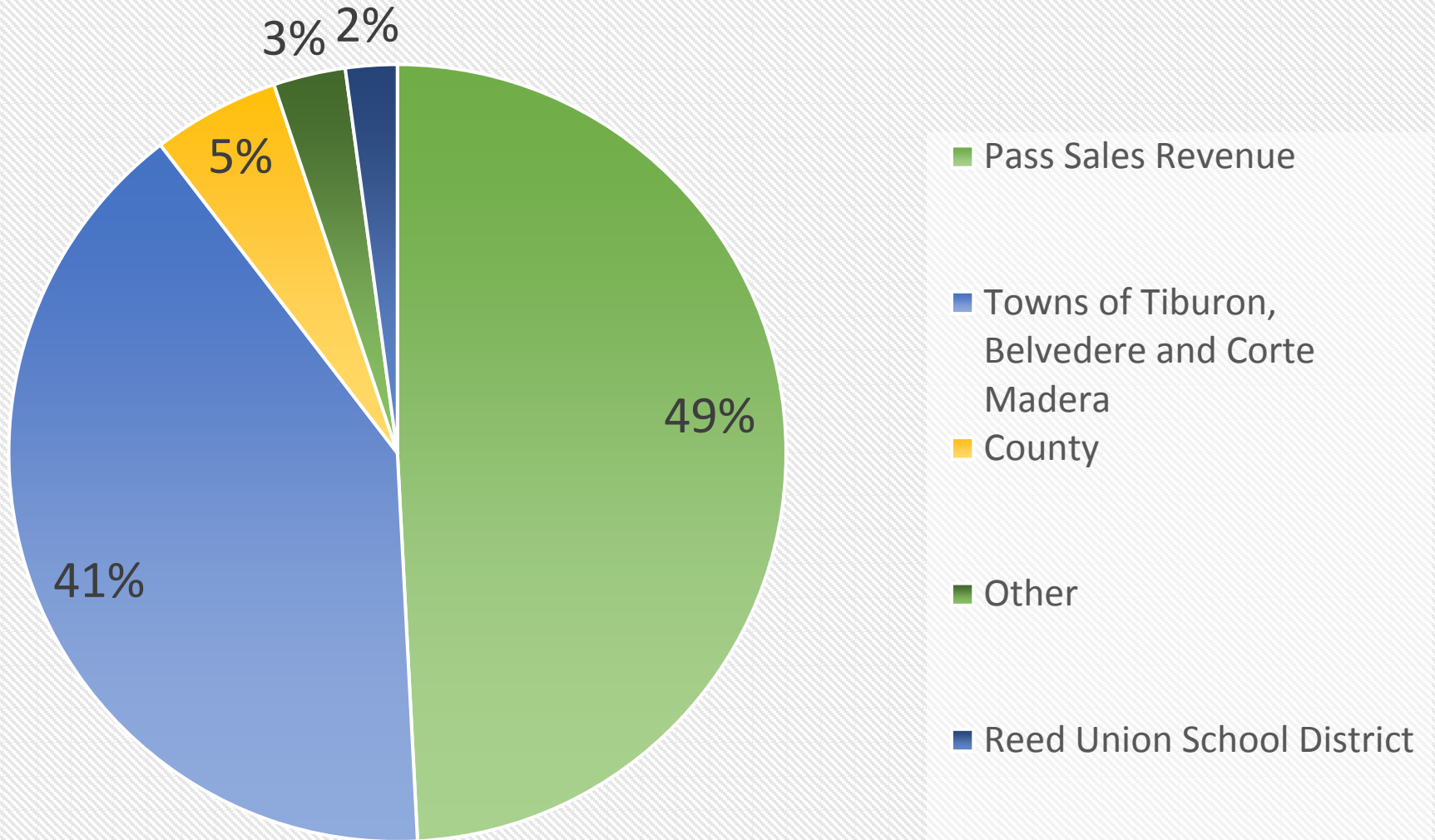
# Funding Sources for the Ross Valley SD Yellow School Bus Program 2016/17



## Funding Sources for the MVSD Yellow Bus Program 2016/17



# Funding Sources for the Reed Union SD Yellow Bus Program 2016/17





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September 15, 2016

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

**SUBJECT: Update on Parking and Facility Needs**

**board of directors**

Dear Ad Hoc Committee 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:** The need for parking school buses in the County was identified and discussed at the Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee meeting on July 18, 2016. At that meeting staff explained the price reductions offered by Michael's Transportation and First Student, contractors for yellow bus services at Mill Valley School District and Reed Union School District. In particular, Michael's Transportation offers a price reduction of approximately 15% per bus per day if they are provided with parking in the County. Additionally, staff reported that school bus providers have indicated that parking availability is a barrier to doing business in Marin County. These conditions have made securing a yellow bus parking facility in the near term one of our highest priorities.

**DISCUSSION:** The Ad Hoc Committee asked staff to refine the parking requirements and to investigate several sites that could meet the short term needs. The current parking needs and the status of several sites considered are presented below.

Current FY15/16 Parking

Site	School Served	Buses Served	Cost	Contract Term/Site Limitations
Los Gamos	RVSD/ RUSD	15	\$2,250/month	Contract Expires June 23, 2017
Christ Lutheran	RVSD	6	\$100/month	Month-to-month parking: The site is slated for re-development as senior housing: No weekend parking
MV School District	MVSD	2	\$0	

## Parking Needs FY16/17 and Near Term

### *Minimum Requirements*

- 18 parking spaces
- Driver restrooms (other amenities a bonus)
- Neighborhood support
- Adequate ability to maneuver buses
- Proximity to school sites and/or highway 101
- Secure location
- Reasonable cost
- Ability to accommodate driver's personal vehicles during school day
- Access in and out of lot throughout the school day
- Overnight and weekend parking
- Contract term of 2-3 years

The ideal parking location would not only meet the minimum requirements but would allow for light maintenance and provide additional driver amenities.

### *Sites Considered/Under Consideration*

Ownership	Site	Status	Reason
School Districts	RVSD –District Parking	Rejected	Lack of space to maneuver buses
	MCOE – Parking lot	Rejected	Facility at capacity; lack of space to maneuver buses
	Novato School District Yard	Initially rejected; under reconsideration	Facility may be at capacity
	Dixie School District Bus Yard	Rejected	Facility at capacity
College of Marin	Parking lot 10 (Kentfield Campus)	Rejected	Neighborhood concerns
	Parking lot 13 (Kentfield Campus)	Rejected	Neighborhood concerns
	Indian Valley Campus	TBD (meeting being scheduled with COM staff)	
City/Town	San Anselmo – Corp Yard	Rejected	Lack of maneuverability
	San Anselmo – Sorich Ranch Park	Rejected	Lack of security, concerns regarding neighborhood acceptance – could be revisited if City willing to make site improvements
County of Marin	Jury Parking	TBD	
	Fairgrounds (behind Exposition Hall)	TBD	
	Christmas Tree Lot	Rejected	Overflow for Marin Center events (100 per year)
	1600 Los Gamos	Lease terminates on June 23, 2017; consider requesting extension offering right to terminate with 60 day notice if space is needed by other tenants	
GGBHTD	Various	Rejected	Space not used for GGBHTD bus operations is leased to private entities
MMWD	Various	TBD	
Private Entities	Mariner Square	Rejected	Owner uninterested in leasing property
	Fairfax Market	On-hold	Property owner expressed willingness to park a few buses during school hours. Not under consideration due to use of Christ Lutheran.

If a new Request for Proposals for yellow bus service in Ross Valley School District is needed, parking availability for FY 17/18 and FY 18/19 needs to be determined in the next 2-3 months. The availability of parking in FY 17/18 will impact contract pricing for the two other school districts as well; thus, the earlier the parking issue can be resolved, the earlier budgets and plans for next year can be made.

#### Long Term

Marin Transit applied to the Transportation Authority of Marin for One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Cycle 2 funds from the Safe Routes to Schools or local funding source in the amount of \$864,000. This would be matched with \$112,000 in Marin Transit Measure A funds, for a total project amount of \$976,000. These funds would be used to plan for and lease or buy a site for school bus parking. TAM is expected to recommend awarding the Safe Routes to Schools portion of OBAG 2 funding later this year.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Ideally, Marin Transit can work with the lessors to extend existing parking arrangements until a permanent site can be purchased and developed. Marin Transit staff will also continue to work with GGBHTD to determine whether parking options may become available as leases expire. Staff is also working with a leasing agent to evaluate additional leasing opportunities through private entities. Leasing from a private party is likely to be the most expensive option, and may trigger zoning considerations.

#### Ad Hoc Committee Role

- Support requests to partner agencies (Marin County, GGBHTD, MCOE/School Districts) for short term parking leases
- Support Marin Transit OBAG application

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara Duffy  
Deputy General Manager





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September 15, 2016

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

**SUBJECT: Status of Ross Valley School District Pilot Program**

**board of directors**

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

Dear Ad Hoc Committee Members:

**DISCUSSION:**

History

Marin Transit's role in providing transportation to Ross Valley School District, and particularly White Hill Middle School, began in the 2005/06 school year. Prior to this, Ross Valley School District contracted directly with Golden Gate Transit (GGBHTD) to provide service on routes 123 (San Anselmo to White Hill) and 127 (Sleepy Hollow to White Hill). In the 2004/2005 school year RVSD paid GGBHTD \$79,777 to provide service on these two routes. In 2005 GGBHTD determined that all local public transit services should originate with Marin Transit, including three routes that were provided by GGBHTD under direct contract with school districts (the two previously mentioned RVSD routes and one route to Larkspur School District). Marin Transit agreed to integrate the GGBHTD routes into their supplemental school services. To provide financial support for these routes the District eliminated unproductive school service on other routes. With the transition of service to Marin Transit, the school districts no longer provided financial support for the services.

Although responsibility for the service to RVSD transitioned to Marin Transit in 2005/06, operation of the service continued to be provided by GGBHTD under contract with Marin Transit until the 2015/16 school year when service was shifted as required by the intergovernmental agreement between GGBHTD and Marin Transit in place at that time. At the end of the 2014/15 school year Marin Transit, through its agreement with GGBHTD, was providing 2,160 hours of supplemental school service to the Ross Valley School District (RVSD), primarily to White Hill School. This service required 12 dedicated vehicles in the afternoon. Given these equipment requirements and the dedicated nature of the service, Marin Transit determined that the RVSD service was most suitably provided under a traditional "yellow bus" contract.

Current Status of Program

In 2015 Marin Transit awarded a one year contract, with two option years, to Michael's Transportation to provide a six yellow bus service to the Ross Valley School District. Last spring the first of the Michael's option years was awarded. Marin Transit will soon begin discussions with Michael's to determine whether they have an interest in exercising the second and final option year.

Marin Transit shifted its \$175,000 annual operating subsidy from the supplemental school service to the yellow bus service in FY 15/16 and has continued that subsidy level this year. Additional partners have participated in funding the yellow bus service including the County of Marin and the Towns of San Anselmo and Fairfax. The Ross Valley School District program continues to successfully serve nearly 1,000 daily riders (about 500 students), relieving congestion on the heavily traveled Sir Francis Drake corridor.

Issues

The RVSD yellow bus program is unique among the yellow bus programs with which Marin Transit is now involved in that Marin Transit has complete ownership of the program including:

- holding the contract
- providing all staff support
- identifying and paying for bus parking
- setting pass prices and managing pass sales
- determining if free or reduced passes are available for families in need
- finding funding partners and coordinating funds
- providing \$175,000 in local funds
- covering any unfunded costs

In its contracts with Reed Union School District (RUSD) and Mill Valley School District (MVSD) many of the above responsibilities are borne by, or shared with, the school districts. Staff believes this later model is more likely to succeed in the long run as it does not put either the financial or staff burden of the service on one entity. Staff would like to work with the RVSD to transition some of these responsibilities to the school district for the next year.

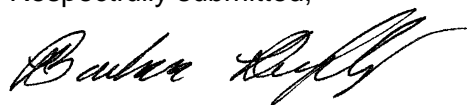
**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that Marin Transit send a letter to the Ross Valley School District outlining the draft terms of a partnership that shares funding and management responsibility for yellow bus service beginning in FY 17/18.

Ad Hoc Committee Role

- Work with staff to bring the appropriate parties to the discussion
- Determine what position Marin Transit should take in the event the RVSD does not want to take a role in providing yellow bus service to their students.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara Duffy  
Deputy General Manager



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September 16, 2016

Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee  
Marin County Transit District  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
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**SUBJECT: Proposed 2016-17 Marin Transit Action Plan**

**board of directors**

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

Dear Ad Hoc Committee Members:

**BACKGROUND:** At the July 18, 2016 Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee meeting, staff presented recommendations for a short- and long-term home-to-school bus transportation plan. This phased Plan was based on the recommendations from 2015 Coordinated Countywide School Transportation Study (CCSTS) and Staffs' recent experience with the 2016-17 yellow bus programs.

The first phase in this proposed plan was termed "current" and was assigned a timeframe of FY 2016-17. The following Action Plan provides more detail on these recommendations to help Staff better understand their priorities to carry out the goals of the larger countywide student bus expansion plans.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Four items were identified in the July 2016 Ad Hoc Committee letter that should be carried out in the 2016-17 fiscal year to advance yellow bus expansion. These include:

1. Establish Marin Transit's role in administration and funding support. Work with Ross Valley, Reed and Mill Valley to implement this relationship for next year
2. Secure temporary parking for 18 buses
3. Work with other high needs districts (Kentfield and Larkspur Corte Madera) to start yellow bus planning
4. Work with TAM on developing a new Countywide funding measure for capital and operations related to the program

It is recommended that Staff also explore additional efforts in FY 2016-17 identified in the CCSTS related to expansion of the Supplemental Transit service to support high school students. These efforts include:

5. Re-evaluating transit fares for youth to better align with yellow bus pricing

6. Assist in transitioning St. Hilary's (private school in Tiburon) supplemental services and re-allocate resources to overcrowded high school routes

These six recommendations are consistent with the recommendations and action items identified in the CCSTS and the following further identifies efforts to achieve these recommendations.

1. **Establish Marin Transit's role in administration and funding support. Work with Ross Valley, Reed and Mill Valley to implement this relationship for next year.** Based on the District's current arrangement with these three yellow bus programs, it is recommended that Staff work to standardize its role with all school districts to focus on service planning and operational oversight of the service. Staff does not feel it is in the District's best interest to be the entity that negotiates and coordinates the financial aspects of the program including identifying funding, developing pass pricing, determining discounts for families in need, and ultimately holding the financial risk associated with the program.

This proposed role is currently the arrangement in place with Reed/Tiburon JPA and Mill Valley and minor adjustments are needed to continue this relationship into the FY 2017-18 year. Staff should focus on working with Ross Valley to transition the responsibility of coordinating funding and signing the contract to another entity for the 2017-18 school year. The District would continue to contribute operating funds at the current levels. Additional background and rationale for this proposal are further detailed in Item #3 of this packet.

2. **Secure temporary parking for 18 buses.** As detailed in Item #2 of this packet, parking continues to be the top priority to sustaining operations for next year. At a minimum, a location for 18 buses should be pursued for the 2016-17 school year. Having this parking defined in advance of the school year will allow contractors increased incentives to bid on the work, retain and recruit drivers, and ultimately offer lower rates for operations.
3. **Work with other high needs districts (Kentfield and Larkspur-Corte Madera) to start yellow bus planning.** Staff recommends that discussions continue with Kentfield and Larkspur – Corte Madera school districts to explore their interest in implementing a future yellow bus program. Although significant work has already been done on the service planning side to develop routes, stops, and timetables needed to estimate costs and potential ridership, setting up a new service contract and other necessary efforts to start the program could take one to two years. Based on recommendation #1 above, the school districts would need to coordinate funding, sign a contract for operations, and decide if they would like to contract with the District to oversee the program.

Implementing yellow bus service in these two Districts would likely impact a few other areas of the current Marin Transit services. First, if Marin Transit is contracted to oversee operations, a new staff member would likely be necessary to assist with the additional work. Second, parking needs would need to be increased to approximately 25 spaces.

4. **Work with TAM on developing a new Countywide funding measure for capital and operations related to the program.** Securing a long-term funding source is essential to sustain and grow student busing services. Staff should continue to work with TAM to identify

the feasibility of a countywide funding measure for student busing services, quantify the amount needed to support anticipated future demand, and gain the support from stakeholders.

5. **Re-evaluate transit fares for youth to better align with yellow bus pricing.** The CCSTS highlights the differential in pricing between public Supplemental services and yellow bus services. Supplemental services are priced at \$1.00 per trip and offer a pay as you go option where most yellow bus services are priced closer to \$2.00 per trip and require you to invest for a semester or the full year. This fare structure results in a heightened demand for Supplemental services over yellow bus simply based on the cost to parents and the school district, not the true needs of the students.

When looking comprehensively at both the operating and capital costs to provide home-to-school busing services, both yellow bus and Supplemental services have comparable costs to provide, especially when you consider both capital and operating costs. The difference, and the reason Supplemental services appear to need a lower ongoing subsidy, is in the capital needs of the equipment. Supplemental services are eligible for federal funds to fund up to 80% of the cost of the equipment. However, these funds are only available for replacement equipment and service expansion would require the District to pay 100% of the cost. Since transit equipment is typically four to five times the price of yellow bus equipment, expanding Supplement service would come with a significant capital cost. Therefore, decisions on fare policy should recognize these costs to expand and operate these services.

Simply raising the Supplemental youth fares to match yellow bus could generate additional funding to support operating cost. The CCSTS reported that increasing the base youth fare from \$1.00 per trip to \$2.00 per trip (the current adult fare) would generate approximately \$500,000 annually and increasing the price of youth pass from \$325 to \$500 and charging a \$25 application fee for free/reduced students would generate another \$125,000 annually.

Staff is currently reviewing fares for all Marin Transit services. A recommendation for revising the fare structure, including student fares, paratransit fares, and others, will be developed later this year.

6. **Assist in transitioning St. Hilary's (private school in Tiburon) supplemental services and re-allocate resources to overcrowded high school routes.** The CCSTS specifically calls out St. Hilary's school as the only private school that specifically receives supplemental school services. This trip also has some of the lowest ridership of any of the Supplemental routes. Thus, staff recommends working with the school to transition these riders to a different service controlled by the school and reallocating resources to the overcrowded high school routes.

With the support of the Ad Hoc Committee to pursue the six action items listed above, Staff would immediately put effort toward completing these in the upcoming months to ensure adequate progress is made for the start of the 2017-18 school year.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Betts  
Director of Operations and Planning