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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction to the Marin County Transit District SRTP

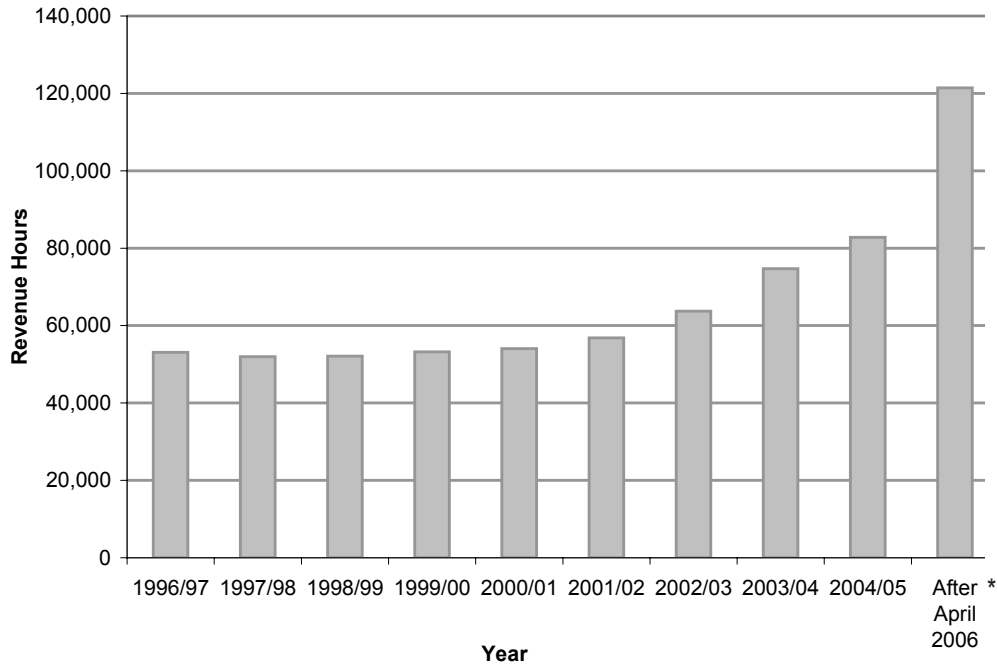
In 1964 the people of Marin County voted to create the Marin County Transit District (MCTD), an independent government entity with the responsibility of providing local transit service within Marin County. The District recently added its second full time employee, and reports to the County's Director of Public Works and a seven-member Transit District policy board. The Transit District Board includes the five members of the Board of Supervisors and representatives from two Marin County cities, currently from San Rafael and Mill Valley.

From its founding until 2003, MCTD's services remained relatively constant while demand for local transit service and paratransit services within Marin County steadily grew. During this time, MCTD's primary fixed route transit function was to act as a "pass through" agency, providing state and federal funding for local transit service (i.e., service within Marin County) to Golden Gate Transit, the regional transit provider, which also planned, managed, and operated local service. MCTD managed and administered the paratransit contract with Whistlestop Wheels for both local and regional paratransit services in Marin County and more recently managed rural services on the West Marin Stagecoach. All of the services that MCTD provided were contracted to other providers; MCTD has never owned any fixed route buses or facilities and has never employed its own drivers.

In November 2003, Golden Gate Transit implemented a major restructuring of its routes, resulting in a dramatic change in the role and responsibilities of MCTD. The restructuring was prompted by a severe financial shortfall at the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transit District, which operates Golden Gate Transit, requiring major reductions in regional transit service. To save money and better match transit service to increasingly local service demands, Golden Gate Transit and MCTD agreed to truncate routes that had previously crossed the county lines and to create new local routes which would operate entirely within Marin County. Many regional routes were thus re-defined as local routes, ultimately transferring responsibility for these routes from Golden Gate Transit to MCTD.

This transition will be complete on May 1, 2006 when four final routes are transferred from Golden Gate Transit to MCTD. After this final transition, the number of annual service hours that MCTD pays for will increase 49% from approximately 82,000 in FY 2004-05 to over 122,000, resulting in a similar increase in operating costs. Including the 2003 restructuring, local service hours have more than doubled, from about 58,000 in 2002 to the 122,000 projected in FY 2005-06, despite an overall reduction in the combination of local and regional service available to Marin County's transit riders. In 2005, local routes will account for well over three million annual passengers, making MCTD one of the largest local transit operations in the state that does not directly serve a major urban center.

Figure ES-1 Local Fixed Route Transit Service Hours Provided by MCTD with Golden Gate Transit as Contractor



* Hours required to maintain current services

This redefinition of some regional routes as local routes significantly increased MCTD’s operating costs without proportionately increasing its revenues. Operating costs have also been affected by increases in the cost per service hour charged by Golden Gate Transit; since 2003, the cost per service hour has increased from \$38.69 prior to the 2003 agreement to \$116 per hour in the current fiscal year. A new agreement which will begin on May 1, 2006 will reduce the average cost per hour to approximately \$110, reflecting Marin County’s desire to introduce small bus service on some local routes. These increases in costs reflect that fact that local transit needs in Marin County can no longer be met simply by utilizing the “down hours” on routes that are providing peak service on the regional system. Demand for local transit in Marin County is consistent all day; nearly all of the buses operating local routes in Marin County

are used only for local service, and nearly all of the drivers operating Marin local routes never operate regional service. The current agreement between Golden Gate and MCTD reflects the increasing cost of providing a local service that is closely linked to, but largely independent of, the regional system.

The transition of routes to MCTD has been accompanied by additional responsibilities for the agency. MCTD is now responsible for the planning, outreach, oversight, and management of virtually all of the transit services that begin and end within the County.

Beginning May 1, 2006, MCTD will begin a newly negotiated contract with Golden Gate Transit to allow Golden Gate to continue as its fixed route service provider, continuing the close relationship between the two organizations, and taking advantage of the existing integration

of MCTD's local transit service requirements into the needs of the broader regional operation. Rural and paratransit service are currently provided by Whistlestop Wheels under separate contracts that will be rebid during the current fiscal year.

Context for the Short Range Transit Plan

The transition of responsibilities to MCTD has several important implications. First, MCTD has been transformed almost overnight from a largely administrative agency to a full-fledged transit agency. While few riders have noticed this transition, the responsibilities that MCTD inherits give it more autonomy to respond to the desires of local transit users in Marin County, as well as more challenges for funding and integrating local transit service with regional services provided by Golden Gate Transit.

The second implication of MCTD's new status is that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Measure A Sales Tax Expenditure Plan passed in 2004 require MCTD to publish a Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) at least every two years. In their SRTP, transit agencies publicly describe their organization, operations, finances, and plans for the future. This document is MCTD's first SRTP, and is thus an opportunity to define its goals, standards, structures, and policies in a way that will allow the agency to effectively prioritize its efforts as it evolves and develops as an agency. The goals of this SRTP include:

- Develop a detailed understanding of the existing local service network including all types of local service – who uses it, how well it functions, and how it could be improved for current riders.

- Refine standards for productivity and mobility that ensure that sales tax funds and other funding resources will be spent in the most efficient and cost effective manner, consistent with the Measure A Sales Tax Expenditure Plan and other funding requirements.
- Use current and projected travel demand, land use, and demographics in the County to identify service gaps, appropriate service models, and appropriate service levels in a constrained financial environment.
- Develop supporting capital, marketing, and administrative plans that will provide the best possible public transit service in Marin County in light of constrained resources.
- Involve the public in deciding the transit future for Marin County.
- Develop policies that can be used to evaluate services and make adjustments over time.

Coordination with Measure A Priorities

Measure A, the half-cent transportation sales tax in Marin County, provides a significant new funding source for local transit in Marin County, which is required to sustain current and future local services. Sales tax expenditure priorities and performance criteria for local transit are clearly documented in the Sales Tax Expenditure Plan approved by the voters in 2004. This Short Range Transit plan will be a direct input into the Strategic Plan of the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), which is the agency responsible for sales tax expenditures.

Specifically, the Short Range Plan and the Sales Tax Expenditure Plan are linked in a number of critical ways:

- The performance goals and objectives developed for local transit services are based largely on the criteria included in the Expenditure Plan, and include all of the criteria mentioned in that plan.
- Funding estimates for Measure A funds are divided into the four categories available through the Expenditure Plan – local fixed route services, paratransit, rural service and capital funds and fund estimates are designed to match the estimates developed for TAM.
- Priority projects for improvements in local transit services were considered and included to the extent possible in the transit service plan.

The recommendations in this SRTP are founded upon extensive data collection and community participation, including: existing operation data from MCTD and Golden Gate Transit, original transit performance and usage data collected on all routes in April 2005, and passenger surveys (2,000+ responses for fixed routes services, 500+ for paratransit users). Numerous community meetings as well as collaboration and review by a Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee provided on-going feedback as the plan progressed.

Services provided by MCTD

As of May 2006, Marin County Transit District will be financially responsible for providing all local transit services within Marin County. These include:

- Fixed route transit – all routes that begin and end in Marin County
- School-oriented special bus trips designed to serve schools at bell times (Routes 107—143) – 272,000 trips per year

- Rural small-bus transit service – the West Marin Stagecoach operated to West Marin by Whistlestop Wheels. (West Marin Stagecoach) – 28,000 trips per year
- Demand responsive service for seniors and persons with disabilities
 - o Paratransit – Whistlestop Wheels – 83,000 trips per year
 - o EZ Rider, a demand responsive shuttle service operating in Novato – 3,000 trips per year

What do these numbers mean in day-to-day life in Marin County? For employed adults, 10% of trips to work are made on public transit¹. As most trips to work are made during peak period commute times, this has a significant effect on area congestion. Moreover, MCTD passenger surveys suggest that transit services prevent about 1,000,000 car trips per year, or about 3,000 per day, further reducing congestion on Marin County roads.

The services provided by MCTD help to make Marin County a healthier, more livable, and more equitable place. Besides reducing congestion, MCTD's services provide basic mobility to the most mobility-limited residents in Marin County – low income, senior, and youth – and basic access to the area's social services, schools, and economic opportunities.

¹ Year 2000 Census data, includes both local and regional transit service

Who uses MCTD services

MCTD users can be divided into two large groups, those that use fixed route services and those that use demand responsive (paratransit) services. To summarize the characteristics of the fixed route users:

- The most common customers of the fixed route system are working age adults using the system to travel to and from work. This is not surprising as trips that occur frequently and at regular times are more likely to be made on transit than trips that occur infrequently and require the rider to learn a new route or schedule.
- In addition to adult commuters, there is a high percentage of youth riders, with 18% of the system's riders reporting being 17 years old or younger.
- Seniors over age 65 are underrepresented on MCTD fixed route service. They comprise 4% of riders, but make up almost 15% of the current population in the County. Long waits between buses, difficulty walking to stops and limited amenities at stops may contribute to the lack of senior ridership, as well as the fact that seniors are not generally making as many routine and regular trips as working age adults or school aged youth.
- MCTD riders also tend to have relatively low household incomes and limited access to autos. Over half of MCTD's riders have household incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. 76% of respondents did not have access to an auto on the day they were surveyed.
- Almost 40% of respondents used the Spanish version of the on-board survey, a much more significant percentage than the population of the County would suggest.
- The most heavily traveled routes outside the Highway 101 corridor service all serve the Canal area of San Rafael, which is the most productive service in the County.

Figure ES-2 Demographic Overview of Transit Riders in Marin County

	Local Transit Rider %	Paratransit Riders %	Marin County %
Age (2000 census)			
Persons under 18 years old	18%	4%	26%
Persons between 18 and 65 years old	78%	23%	61%
Persons 65 years old and older	4%	77%	14%
Gender			
Female	48%	77%	50%
Male	52%	23%	50%
Income			
Under \$10,000	included below	28%	5%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	51%	38%	10%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	16%	12%	7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12%	12%	12%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	10%	7%	18%
\$75,000 or more	10%	3%	48%
Auto Ownership			
None	44%	no data	5%
One	27%	no data	35%
Two	19%	no data	42%
Three or more	10%	no data	18%
Language			
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	39%	no data	20%

Sources: US Census Bureau State and County QuickFacts
2005 Passenger Survey, Nelson Nygaard

Paratransit service is intended to serve persons with disabilities that make it impossible for them to use accessible fixed route transit. While these disabled riders tend to be older adults, MCTD's paratransit riders are generally older than comparable paratransit systems. Two-thirds of all paratransit riders reported being over age 75 and one-third reported being over age 85. The population needing paratransit services is expected to grow significantly over time, increasing from about 4,000 in 2005 to over 6,000 in 2020, with implications for the growth of cost of providing paratransit services. This is an issue that MCTD will have to address in the years to come.

A high percentage of paratransit riders have very low incomes. Two-thirds of riders (66%) live in households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 and 28% live in households with an annual income of less than \$10,000. Though paratransit trips can be made for any trip purpose, 85% of respondents indicated that they use this service only for medical trips.

While paratransit service is intended to serve all residents in Marin County, service quality varies greatly in different parts of the County. Trips within the service area "mandated" by the Americans With Disabilities Act – generally within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of an operating fixed route service – receive priority, while areas outside of the mandated area receive service as space allows. This results in many denials of service requests from outside the mandated area, making it difficult to rely on this service for medical trips and appointments.

Performance of MCTD

This SRTP emphasizes measurements of MCTD's performance for the services it provides. These performance measurements are consistent with the Sales Tax Expenditure Plan that specifies performance goals to be used to measure the success of the local transit system, and reflect the state of the practice with peer systems. Incorporating these values and goals into a comprehensive system of performance measures is critical to enable MCTD to make principled decisions about how to allocate limited services and resources.

Performance standards are not "guarantees" of achievement but are designed as a tool for MCTD and the public to judge the effectiveness of its services. The most commonly used and straightforward measure of operational performance is productivity – the number of passengers carried per revenue service hour. This measure is broadly used throughout the industry to evaluate the efficiency of transit systems and is included in the Expenditure Plan as a primary measure of transit performance. Another important measure of both productivity and cost effectiveness is subsidy per passenger trip. Routes with high ridership will tend to have lower per passenger subsidies.

Figure ES-3 presents these standards for each type of service MCTD provides. More detailed information about system performance is included in Chapter 2 of this plan.

Figure ES-3 Route Productivity and Subsidy Goals

Service Type	Passengers per Hour*	Subsidy per Passenger Trip
System-wide Urban Fixed Route	20	\$5
Rural Fixed Route	4	\$12
School	20*	\$4
Local Initiative	7	\$8
Paratransit	2	\$30

Note: The productivity measure for school routes uses passengers per trip instead of passengers per hour, due to the limited service hours of this service type.

These goals, based on the type of service offered, recognize the different performance expectations of different types of service and are consistent with industry peers. Services that meet these standards can be justified based on their return on investment alone. Services that fail to meet these standards must be analyzed based on the other performance criteria, such as a route’s importance in completing a transit network, its usefulness to a particularly transit-dependent community, or the geographic coverage it provides. These additional criteria are useful for analyzing alternative investments and comparing a potential service to existing services that are not fully meeting the goal for productivity and cost effectiveness. No transit system can afford to run routes that fail to meet minimum performance standards, because running unproductive service inevitably means that areas with high potential for transit ridership are unserved or underserved.

In addition to these efficiency measures, this SRTP suggests a range of other measures of performance that are consistent with Measure A and designed for MCTD to evaluate success

in meeting the transit needs of its customers. These include goals for serving highly transit dependent riders, and encouraging senior and youth riders onto the system.

What this SRTP proposes

The service changes that this SRTP proposes have been informed by the values and performance standards reviewed by the MCTD Board of Directors and expressed in the Measure A expenditure plan. These are outlined in detail in this document.

Responses to the customer survey and comments received in public meetings were also carefully considered. When asked what improvements would better serve their needs, by far the most common response was for increased frequency rather than new service coverage or earlier or later service. Increasing weekend service and reducing fares were also commonly mentioned by riders as important improvements. In addition, the high priority transit improvements listed in Measure A were considered as the transit system plan was developed.

The proposed service plan also respects the basic design principle for the County: the local and regional systems are not independent of one another, and the Highway 101 corridor (Lines 70 and 80) is the main trunk line that unites these systems. Most of MCTD’s fixed route system is designed around connections with this trunk line. Where local lines connect with the trunk, the connection is usually timed, so that passengers do not have to wait long for a connecting bus. San Rafael Transit Center has the most extensive timed connections in

the county, but there are also important timed connections at Marin City, Novato, and San Anselmo. The schedules of MCTD local routes are largely determined by these connections. Frequently, local services assist people in completing regional trips. Many people also use regional services to travel locally within Marin County. The system design encourages this interdependence, emphasizing coordination over duplication to maximize mobility for both local and regional markets.

The following system-wide objectives for redesigning the fixed route service plan were developed using these considerations, as well as information gathered from peer systems, policy makers, and the technical and citizens advisory committees.

- Increase frequency on key corridors throughout the system to maximize ridership.
- Enhance connectivity so that consumers can ride from any place to any other place in Marin County with no more than two transfers, and the majority of transfers can be timed.
- Allow for appropriately sized vehicles throughout the County, introducing smaller vehicles on routes where the maximum load will not exceed the seated capacity of a smaller bus.
- Better reflect travel model results for travel demand.
- Enhance school service, expanding service to schools that are not appropriately served, and providing better bell time coordination.
- Provide a system that is a better match to the performance standards for both productivity and coverage.

To achieve these goals, this SRTP proposes two

overarching changes to the way local transit service is currently provided. First, the service plan proposes the use of smaller vehicles on some routes that better match vehicle size to demand. The second change is the addition of local initiative partnership service. These are services that are jointly funded by MCTD and another local partner, such as a municipality or another interested agency, to provide desired transit service that could not meet MCTD's minimum standard for productivity. This will give MCTD the flexibility it needs to work with local communities to meet locally-identified transit needs – usually coverage in low-density areas where there is a small but acute transit need – in areas where MCTD cannot justify fixed route service.

The following summarizes the impacts of the service plan on local communities based on the transportation needs in each area. Where the proposed service improvement reflects a priority project from Measure A, it is noted below. Of particular note is that when the plan is fully implemented over 1/3 of the proposed service hours will be operated with small buses. The amount of service provided with small bus vehicles will increase over time as buses are acquired.

Northern Marin

- **Enhance local circulation – recognizing that over half of the trips generated in Novato stay in Novato – emphasizes small buses in neighborhoods.**
- Eliminate the long and circuitous trips on the 57 and 59 routes in favor of enhanced connectivity.

- Create a consistent half-hour service on South Novato Boulevard.
- Provide service to Hamilton.
- New school service to Novato High, Marin Oaks and Hill Middle School.
- Plan for the ultimate implementation of a new transit hub in Southern Novato.

San Rafael Area

- Expand hours of 15 minute service to Canal.
- Add direct service from Canal to Marin General and College of Marin.
- Add direct service from SRTC to Mill Valley with convenient connections to the Canal route.
- Single seat ride from Canal to Civic Center, Northgate, and northern San Rafael destinations.
- Fast direct service from Civic Center, Northgate and Kaiser to SRTC.
- Maximize existing County Connection shuttle and create the first local initiative partnership route.
- Maintain peak hour service to neighborhoods that have lost their service due to recent GGT cuts.
- Improve school service to Terra Linda High and schools in Terra Linda neighborhood.

Ross Valley Area

- Direct service from Fairfax to SRTC eliminates the need to transfer in San Anselmo.
- Enhanced frequency on Sir Francis Drake corridor.
- Eliminates low performing Route 21, but retains coverage through new routing.
- Improved school service to Lagunitas and San Geronimo schools from San Anselmo.

Southern Marin Area

- Enhance peak period frequency between Sausalito, Marin City, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Kentfield, San Anselmo and San Rafael.
- Direct Mill Valley/San Rafael Service.
- Midday shuttle service through Larkspur and Corte Madera that is a good candidate for local initiative expansion.
- Direct service from Southern Marin to Ross Valley serving College of Marin and connecting Sausalito, Marin City, Corte Madera, Kentfield and San Anselmo.
- Improve service to Reed Schools from Mill Valley and Tiburon.
- Improve service to Tam High, Horizon Middle School and Mill Valley Middle School.
- Reduce dependence on Strawberry as a transfer point.
- Improve Marin City transit hub.

West Marin Area

- Better coordination between the Stage and High Schools.
- Eliminate pass ups through larger vehicles.
- Extend the North Route to SRTC.
- Add weekend service where possible.
- Introduce pilot coastal service.

■ = Measure A Priority Project

MCTD Capital and Financial Plans

The plan estimates a ridership increase of 25% over the next five years assuming the system is able to meet its full potential. Meeting its potential requires a capital plan that provides for new vehicle types, enhanced bus stops, and improved transfer centers, as well as a financial plan that brings stability to the system. Capital projects will be paid for by a variety of sources, including a number of discretionary sources which will dictate the speed at which capital projects can be implemented. MCTD's new contract with Golden Gate Transit calls for MCTD to provide matching funds for the purchase of buses dedicated to local service, and a proportional match for buses it shares with the regional system. MCTD will also be responsible for contributing a share of capital funds for maintenance facilities and other systemwide transit capital needs in proportion to the amount it uses. The ability to go beyond these commitments is dependent on discretionary funds. Other priority capital projects include a new transit hub in Novato, improved bus stop amenities, and enhanced rider information as well as expanding the paratransit vehicle fleet.

The service plan presented in this plan is designed to maximize ridership while retaining coverage to as much of the County as possible. It does not allow for significant growth in the number of service hours provided, but does reallocate existing resources in a more efficient and effective way, and also allows for small increases in service over time. Available resources allow for a plan that proposes a slight increase in total service hours, including 5% a year growth

in paratransit, limited local initiative partnership service, and a small increase in fixed route service based largely on reallocating hours from poorly performing routes to routes with more potential. Ultimately, more than one-third of fixed route service hours will be provided by smaller buses, which will be implemented over time as small buses become available.

The plan is designed to meet the requirements for sustainability over the SRTP period. Existing revenue sources are sufficient to produce a balanced operating budget through the contract period with Golden Gate Transit. Beginning in 2010/11, additional revenue will be required to maintain proposed service levels. At this point, additional revenues will be needed, service levels will be reduced, or lower cost service must be identified. The financial plan for MCTD operations as well as potential sources for expanded funding in the future are presented in Chapter 7. The implementation plan for the new service is described in Chapter 8.

The new service plan will be complemented by a marketing plan, as outlined in Chapter 5. This plan will help to establish an MCTD identity and brand to distinguish it from Golden Gate Transit and help riders understand the difference between the regional and local transit systems. The marketing plan also includes education and outreach efforts for targeted groups – youth, seniors, employers, existing riders, and visitors – to increase ridership. The proposed marketing plan is not lavish, but will allow the MCTD to provide basic outreach materials and customer-experience related improvements.

The future of public transportation in Marin County

With MCTD's new responsibilities, its first SRTP is an opportunity to take a purposeful step in the right direction – creating a service plan and supporting capital improvement, marketing, and financial plans that will allow it to provide stable and sustainable local transit service in a way that maximizes its productivity and social benefits. This SRTP articulates the tools and policies that MCTD can use to make decisions in the future as service demand evolves.

Following MCTD Board adoption of this plan, the real work of scheduling and finalizing services for implementation can begin. Much of the service plan can be implemented in Fall 2006. Prior to implementing service changes, the Short Range Transit Plan will be reviewed and improved by TAM as part of the Strategic Plan Process.

As required by Measure A, the plan will be updated every two years.

CHAPTER 1 SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Marin County Transit District History and Current Structure

The Marin County Transit District (MCTD) was formed by a vote of the people of Marin County in 1964, and was given the responsibility for providing local transit service within Marin County. Although MCTD has responsibility for local transit services, it does not own any transit buses¹ or facilities and does not employ its own drivers. Instead, MCTD contracts with other providers, including Golden Gate Transit and Whistlestop Wheels, for local bus and paratransit services.

Prior to a major fixed route service restructuring by Golden Gate Transit in November 2003, the primary responsibility of Marin's transit district was to manage and administer the paratransit contract for both local and regional paratransit services for persons with disabilities in Marin County. For fixed route services, MCTD was historically a "pass through" agency providing funds for local routes designed and managed by Golden Gate Transit. With the 2003 service restructuring and current contract with Golden Gate Transit, MCTD has assumed full responsibility for the planning, outreach, oversight and management of local fixed route transit services throughout the County.

The Transit District currently has two full time

¹ MCTD does own a number of paratransit vehicles and the vehicles currently used for the West Marin Stagecoach, but does not own any fixed route vehicles.

employees, the Transit Planning Manager, who reports to the Director of Public Works and a newly hired Senior Planner. The District is a separate government agency, not a county department, although some support staffing is provided through the County. The District reports to a seven-member Transit District policy board, made up of five members of the Board of Supervisors and two city representatives, currently from San Rafael and Mill Valley.

Relationships to Other Key Agencies

Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)

The Transportation Authority of Marin was created in 2004, with the passage of the County's first transportation sales tax. TAM is responsible for managing sales tax funds and implementing the Sales Tax Expenditure Plan. In addition, TAM acts as the County's Congestion Management Agency. Funds from Marin County's sales tax are the largest single source of funding for the MCTD agency, and coordination with TAM is crucial to implementing service improvements. Measure A will provide 55% of sales tax proceeds over the next 20 years, or about \$182 M over the life of the sales tax to local transit services in four key areas: local fixed route service, specialized services for seniors, persons with disabilities, youth and low income residents, rural services and transit capital. The Sales Tax Expenditure Plan, approved by the voters of Marin County, also identified key performance measures and high priority transit improvements which are incorporated into this

Short Range Transit Plan. The Short Range Transit Plan must be approved by TAM, ensuring that the plan is fiscally sound and meets the goals of the sales tax expenditure plan. TAM will utilize the SRTP as input to its Strategic Plan and budget for the next two fiscal years.

Golden Gate Transit (GGT)

The relationship between MCTD and Golden Gate Transit has three distinct and important components. First, MCTD contracts with Golden Gate Transit to provide local fixed route transit service in Marin County. MCTD has recently assumed increased responsibility for these local routes, and is now responsible for planning, marketing, funding and managing the local service, which is provided with Golden Gate's vehicles and personnel. In addition, MCTD coordinates with Golden Gate Transit's regional services including commuter express bus service, ferry service and the important all-day services operating along the 101-corridor. While MCTD does not have any direct responsibility for these regional services, it does providing partial funding through State and Federal sources. The 101-corridor service, managed by Golden Gate Transit, provides the critical "spine" that links all local services and connects the communities around the County. Finally, MCTD and Golden Gate Transit work together to provide comprehensive paratransit services to persons with disabilities in Marin County. MCTD manages the contract for both local and intercounty paratransit service, known as Whistlestop Wheels, which is currently contracted with the Marin Senior Coordinating Council. Golden Gate Transit provides planning and financial support for

the regional service and for their share of local paratransit, while MCTD manages the contract and provides planning and policy direction for local paratransit service.

Whistlestop Wheels

Whistlestop Wheels, a service of the Marin Senior Coordination Council, provides a comprehensive system of specialized transportation focusing on elderly and disabled populations in Marin County. MSCC has been the paratransit contractor in Marin County for over 2 decades. MCTD and Marin County residents benefit from coordination of the paratransit system with other services provided by Whistlestop Wheels including transportation to health care and social service organizations in the County. Whistlestop also operates the West Marin Stagecoach and EZ Rider services under contract to MCTD.

Citizens Committees

Throughout the development of this SRTP, the Marin County Transit District has worked with a diverse Citizens Advisory Committee. This committee will continue to work with the District as it implements recommendations from the plan.

In addition, MCTD receives advice from its Accessibility Committee, which serves as the Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC) for Marin County. The committee represents paratransit consumers, representatives of human services agencies that serve people with disabilities and seniors, and paratransit providers.

Figure 1-1: Marin County Cities and Major Roads



Nelson Nygaard
consulting associates

Source: Golden Gate Transit, Marin Community Development Agency, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, 2003. City/Town boundaries are approximate.

Service Area Characteristics and Travel Demand

There are eleven incorporated cities and towns within Marin County. Figure 1-1 on the previous page shows a map of the County and each of its town boundaries. Figures 1-2 through 1-3 present current population by City, and Year 2000 demographic and population data from the US Census. This data is for the total population, not limited to bus riders.

Figure 1-2 Estimated Population of Marin County Cities

	2003*	2004*	Percent Change
MARIN COUNTY	249,800	250,200	0.2%
Belvedere	2,130	2,130	0.0%
Corte Madera	9,375	9,350	-0.3%
Fairfax	7,300	7,300	0.0%
Larkspur	12,000	12,000	0.0%
Mill Valley	13,600	13,600	0.0%
Novato	48,550	49,400	1.8%
Ross	2,350	2,350	0.0%
San Anselmo	12,350	12,350	0.0%
San Rafael	57,000	56,900	-0.2%
Sausalito	7,350	7,325	-0.3%
Tiburon	8,775	8,775	0.0%
Balance of County	69,000	68,700	-0.4%

Source California Statistical Abstract, Table B-4. State of California,
Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit.
*Estimated population on January 1, 2003 and 2004

Figure 1-3 Demographic Overview of Marin County

	Marin County	%	California	%
Total Population (2003 estimate)	246,073		35,484,453	
Total Population (2000 census)	247,289		33,871,648	
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003	-0.50%		4.80%	
Population, percent change, 1990 to 2000	7.50%		13.60%	
Age (2000 census)				
Persons under age 5 (not included in age total)	13,354	5.4%	2,472,630	7.3%
Persons under 18 years old	50,200	20.3%	9,246,960	27.3%
Persons between 18 and 65 years old	150,352	60.8%	18,561,663	54.8%
Persons 65 years old and older	33,384	13.5%	3,590,395	10.6%
Gender				
Female	124,634	50.4%	17,071,311	50.4%
Male	122,655	49.6%	16,800,337	49.6%
Disability				
Persons with a disability, age 5+, 2000	34,758	14.1%	5,923,361	17.5%
Journey to Work				
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2000	32.3		27.7	
Ethnicity				
White persons, 2000 (a)	207,723	84.0%	20,153,631	59.5%
Black or African American persons	7,171	2.9%	2,269,400	6.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons	989	0.4%	338,716	1.0%
Asian persons	11,128	4.5%	3,692,010	10.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander persons	495	0.2%	101,615	0.3%
Persons reporting some other race	11,128	4.5%	5,690,437	16.8%
Persons reporting two or more races	8,655	3.5%	1,591,967	4.7%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	27,449	11.1%	10,974,414	32.4%
White persons, not of Hispanic/Latino origin	194,369	78.6%	15,818,060	46.7%
Language and Education				
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	48,221	19.5%	13,379,301	39.5%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	225,528	91.2%	26,013,426	76.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000	126,859	51.3%	9,009,858	26.6%
Housing and Households				
Housing units, 2002	105,960		12,507,767	
Homeownership rate, 2000	63.60%		56.90%	
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2000	29.30%		31.40%	
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2000	\$514,600		\$211,500	
Households, 2000	100,650		11,502,870	
Persons per household, 2000	2.34		2.87	
Median household income, 1999	\$71,306		\$47,493	
Persons below poverty, percent, 1999	6.60%		14.20%	
Land Facts				
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	520		155,959	
Persons per square mile, 2000	475.7		217.2	

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

Source: US Census Bureau State and County QuickFacts

Bus rider demographics, which are presented in detail in the System Level Analysis and Line-by-Line Analysis reports completed for this plan, vary significantly from overall County demographics. Figure 1-4 presents key demographic data for local fixed route, rural services and paratransit riders, compared with the demographics of the county as a whole.

Figure 1-4 Demographic Overview of Transit Riders in Marin County

	Local Transit Rider %	Paratransit Riders %	Marin County %
Age (2000 census)			
Persons under 18 years old	18%	4%	26%
Persons between 18 and 65 years old	78%	23%	61%
Persons 65 years old and older	4%	77%	14%
Gender			
Female	48%	77%	50%
Male	52%	23%	50%
Income			
Under \$10,000	included below	28%	5%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	51%	38%	10%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	16%	12%	7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12%	12%	12%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	10%	7%	18%
\$75,000 or more	10%	3%	48%
Auto Ownership			
None	44%	no data	5%
One	27%	no data	35%
Two	19%	no data	42%
Three or more	10%	no data	18%
Language			
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	39%	no data	20%

Sources: US Census Bureau State and County QuickFacts

2005 Passenger Survey, Nelson Nygaard

Local fixed route transit service in Marin County is focused on the arterial street network that provides services connecting to the Highway 101 corridor. The roadway network in the County focuses on the highway, which tends to be used for local, as well as long distance trips. There are few reasonable alternatives to Highway 101 for north-south travel in the County because of the lack of parallel roads and terrain issues. With Golden Gate Transit providing the primary transit service on the Highway 101 corridor, MCTD has focused on providing local mobility and making timed connections to the corridor service.

Travel demand in Marin County has changed substantially in the last decade. In the past, Marin County essentially served as a “bedroom” for San Francisco; today nearly 60% of all work trips generated within the County stay in Marin County and less than 1/3 travel to San Francisco. Rather than being simply a trip “producer”, Marin County has become a major trip attractor, attracting well over 100,000 work trips into the County from outside of Marin County. Added to the significant number of shopping, recreation and educational trips entering and staying within the County, Marin has an increasing need for local circulation off of the Highway 101 corridor.

For all trips in Marin County, Figure 1-5 shows where trips originating in each community are ultimately destined. The data includes all trip purposes and times of day, and is based on the results of Marin County’s travel demand model.

The figure illustrates the point that most trips beginning in the County remain in the County,

regardless of where these trips begin. Generally, over 80% of all trips originating from a city or town in Marin County travel to another destination within the County, with the exception of Sausalito/Marin City, where 63% of originating trips stay in the County.

Many trips in the County are short local trips. This makes sense, as we tend to go to school, shop, attend medical appointments, and conduct personal business very locally. The figure shows, for example, that 55% of the trips originating in Novato were destined to another location within Novato and 51% of the trips originating in San Rafael stayed within San Rafael.

Nearly all parts of the county have strong connections to San Rafael, the largest city in the county, and the center of county government. The combination of services available in San Rafael attracts large numbers of trips from every part of the County.

The travel demand model shows a need for both local circulation service within cities, between each city and its adjacent neighbors, and connections to all parts of Marin County, generally via corridor service along Hwy 101. This combination creates a need for service that is both very local and countywide in scope.

Existing Services

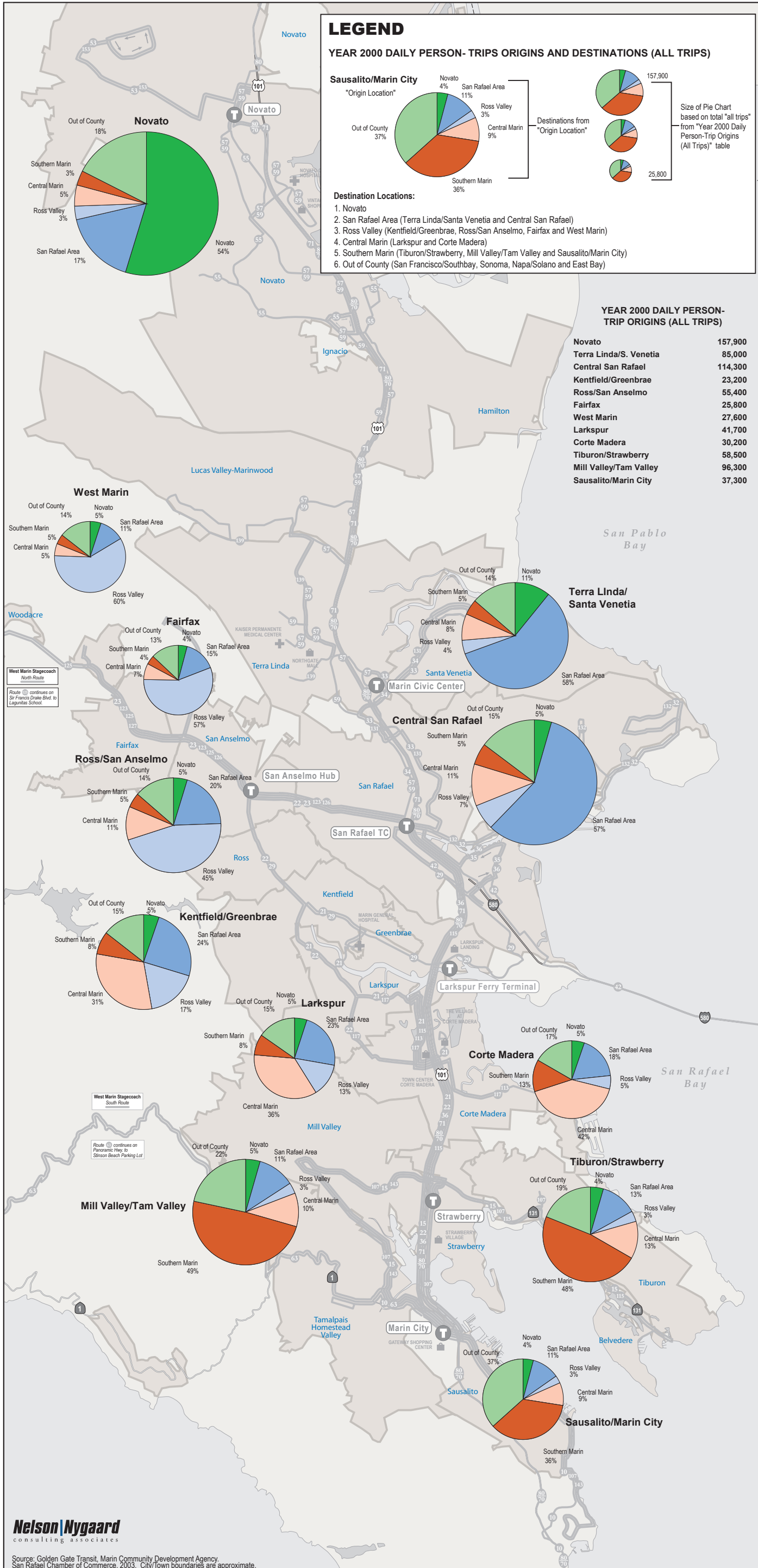
The following sections provide a very brief overview of the services offered by Marin County Transit District. A more detailed analysis of existing services is provided in the System Level Analysis and Line-by-Line Analysis documents published separately.

Local Fixed Route Service

Figure 1-6 shows the fixed route services provided by MCTD in Marin County. The map includes four routes that are currently under Golden Gate Transit's responsibility, which will become MCTD routes on May 1, 2006. MCTD provides three types of local fixed route transit service:

- All day local fixed routes which include routes that are currently planned and paid for by MCTD, and four transitional routes which will become MCTD's responsibility on May 1, 2006.
- School-oriented services, which include special school routes and added trips that operate only on school days. Yellow school bus service, provided by school districts is not currently part of the MCTD responsibilities.
- Rural service, which includes the West Marin Stagecoach and the Route 63 weekend service. The Stagecoach is provided by MCTD through a contract with Whistle-stop Wheels. Route 63 service is provided seasonally through the contract with Golden Gate Transit. The Muir Woods Shuttle, (Route 66) a demonstration project that began operation in the Summer of 2005, is not currently an MCTD route, but could be considered for continued service as an MCTD route in the future.

Figure 1-5: Year 2000 Daily Person-Trip Origins and Destinations



Over 3.1 million trips per year are made on the local fixed route network.

MCTD also operates Route 149. This is a unique route in that it only serves as a weekly training service for developmentally disabled adults attending classes at the Indian Valley College campus. The service is designed to provide training for students to learn to ride the bus.

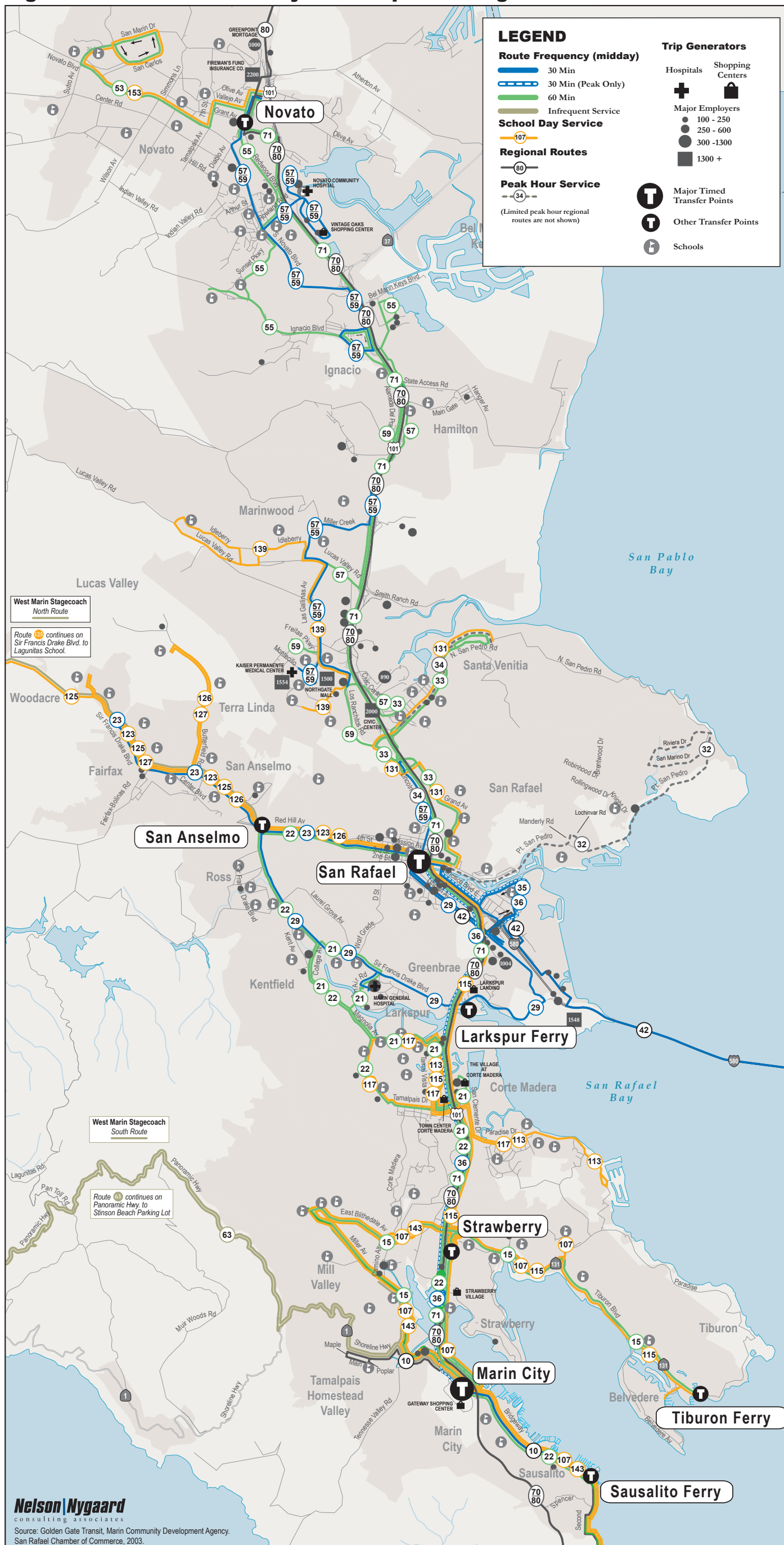
Over the past two decades, local transit routes in Marin County experienced very little change until 2003, when a major restructuring of regional and local routes occurred. The restructuring was prompted by a severe financial shortfall at the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transit District, requiring major reductions in transit service. In order to retain the local parts of routes that had previously traveled over the Golden Gate Bridge, MCTD became responsible for many more routes and service hours than had previously been included in local service. Following a transitional period, which will end on April 30, 2006, Marin County Transit District will be responsible for virtually all of the transit services that begin and end in the County.

All services provided by MCTD are contracted to service providers. The largest service provider is Golden Gate Transit, which integrates MCTD's local transit service requirements into its broader regional operation, sharing vehicles and facilities between the local and regional system. All vehicles used for this service are accessible and can accommodate bicycles. To maximize efficiencies, all buses are currently painted and labeled as Golden Gate Transit buses, and do not bear any MCTD markings. Golden Gate Transit operates most local routes with standard 40-foot coaches, with the excep-

tion of the Routes 35 and 36 which provide service from the San Rafael Transit Center to the Canal and Marin City and are regularly operated with articulated 60-foot buses.

Figure 1-7 shows each of the existing local and transitional routes, its span of service, and annual service hours and miles, as well as basic system data. Service performance is described in detail in subsequent chapters of this document.

Figure 1-6: MCTD Transit System Map - Existing Local Routes



Note: Includes local and corridor service only. Map does not depict Golden Gate Transit Regional service.

Figure 1-7 MCTD Routes

#	Route	Description	Days of Operation	Service Span		Frequency	Annual Ridership	Annual Hours of Service	Annual Miles of Service
				Weekdays	Weekends				
<i>Local Routes</i>									
15	Tiburon MC daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:41 am-10:27 pm	7:39 am-10:28 pm	60	210,388	11,444	122,749
21	Strawberry COM daily		MTuWThF	8:14 am-4:48 pm	*	60	16,645	4,517	35,581
22	San Anselmo Sausalito daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:39 am-12:59 am	6:49 am-12:54 am	60	393,688	15,996	186,185
23	Fairfax/ SRTC daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:22 am-11:23 pm	5:52 am-11:49 pm	60	250,251	13,118	99,220
29	San Anselmo/ SRTC daily		MTuWThFSaSun	6:37 am-8:28 pm	7:11 am-8:31 pm	30	218,021	12,342	141,172
33	Santa Veneta/ SRTC daily		MTuWThF	7:55 am-5:48 pm	*	60	41,387	2,608	25,654
35	Canal/ SRTC daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:00 am-11:18 pm	5:01 am-11:18 pm	30	773,448	7,493	40,836
55	Ignacio daily		MTuWThF	6:58 am-4:57 pm	*	60	34,948	2,592	34,752
59	SRTC/ Novato daily		MTuWThF	5:58 am-6:40 pm	*	60	171,452	8,353	128,502
<i>Subtotal</i>									
							2,110,228	78,463	814,651
<i>Transitional Routes</i>									
36	Canal/ MC daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:27 am-12:48 am	6:16 am-12:48 am	30	338,139	10,083	94,496
53	San Marin daily		MTuWThF	7:04 am-5:46 pm	*	60	42,731	5,862	29,028
57	SRTC/ Novato daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:40 am-12:00 am	5:38 am-12:02 am	60	332,592	11,859	252,959
71	Novato/ SRTC/ MC daily		MTuWThFSaSun	5:46 am-6:24 pm	6:53 am-8:38 am	60	181,857	4,328	97,218
<i>Subtotal</i>									
							893,319	32,132	453,701
<i>MCTD School Routes</i>									
107	Sausalito/ St Hilary's		MTuWThF	7:08 am-3:33 pm	*		12,720	737	12,960
113	Corte Madera/ RHS		MTuWThF	7:28 am-3:47 pm	*		9,356	217	3,006
115	Tiburon/ RHS		MTuWThF	6:58 am-3:56 pm	*		23,351	626	8,567
125	Drake/ Lagunitas		MTuWThF	2:10 pm-4:01 pm	*		16,426	378	7,476
126	San Anselmo/ Brookside		MTuWThF	7:41 am-4:14 pm	*		31,325	746	9,681
131	SRTC		MTuWThF	7:29 am-7:50 am	*		3,534	118	1,594
132	Glenwood/ SRHS		MTuWThF	3:48 pm-4:37 pm	*		565	97	1,155
139	Lucas Valley/ TLHS		MTuWThF	1:45 pm-4:05 pm	*		7,052	205	4,725
143	Sausalito/ THS		MTuWThF	2:44 pm-4:03 pm	*		11,689	235	4,020
149	IVC training		MTuWThF	**	**		169	87	1,914
117	Corte Madera/ NGS/ Hall		MTuWThF	7:54 am-3:40 pm	*		12,628	260	3,729
123	San Anselmo/ WHS		MTuWThF	7:20 am-3:46 pm	*		44,987	1,174	12,846
127	Sleepy Hollow/ WHS		MTuWThF	7:10 am-3:36 pm	*		22,585	578	7,868
<i>Subtotal</i>									
							196,387	5,458	79,541
<i>Rural/ Stagecoach Routes</i>									
63	MC/ Stinson Beach weekend		SatSun	*	8:38 am-6:59 pm		7,247	871	12,334
**	West Marin Stagecoach		MTuWThF	6:17 am-7:43 pm	*		22,100	5,981	100,397
<i>Subtotal</i>									
							29,347	6,852	112,731
<i>Paratransit</i>									
							82,984	38,788	23,264
<i>EZ Rider</i>									
							3,341	2,100	23,264
							3,317,606	163,792	1,483,888

Note: Data reflects Transit data from February 2005 through January 2006.

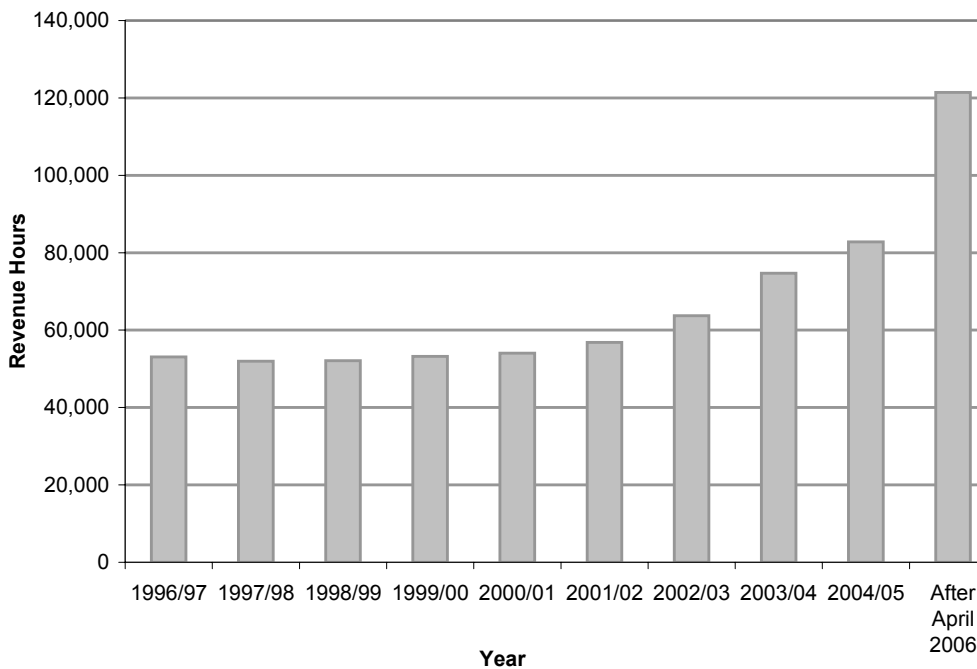
Fixed Route Transit Costs

The cost of transit service is directly related to the number of service hours operated. The net effect of the 2003 restructuring was to create many more local service hours by truncating routes that had previously crossed the county lines. MCTD was able to “save” local service coverage by converting these routes that begin and end within the County. The net result is a significant increase in local service hours. MCTD’s service hours will increase by more than 40% when the remaining local routes are transitioned from Golden Gate Transit’s responsibility to MCTD’s responsibility on May 1, 2006.

Figure 1-8 shows the historic and projected number of revenue service hours paid for by MCTD as “local fixed route transit service” under contract to Golden Gate Transit, assuming no significant changes in service before the end of the current fiscal year.

The other factor influencing the cost of transit service is the unit cost, or cost per hour of service paid to the contract operator. For many years, local transit service was designed to take advantage of the peak-oriented service operated by Golden Gate Transit. By operating local service during the midday when Golden Gate Transit’s buses and drivers were otherwise idle, Golden Gate offered MCTD a very low cost per hour, based primarily on the “wheel cost” of adding mileage to the bus, not accounting for most driver hours or other costs. Over time, the demand for more local services during the peak period, and a reduction in the amount of peak service offered by Golden Gate Transit, reduced the opportunities to “fit” the systems together in this manner. Increasingly, local services are operated by dedicated vehicles and drivers, separate from Golden Gate’s regional service. The current cost for local fixed route transit service, about \$116 per hour, was intended to represent the full marginal cost of providing that service.

Figure 1-8 Local Fixed Route Transit Service Hours Provided by MCTD with Golden Gate Transit as Contractor



MCTD and Golden Gate Transit have recently negotiated a new contract, which will begin on May 1, 2006, when the current contract expires. Under the terms of the new agreement, the cost per service hour will be reduced to \$110, in anticipation of implementation of a lower cost small bus service. Opportunities for small (22-passenger) bus service are discussed in Chapter 3 – Service Plan. When the plan is fully implemented, about 1/3 of the local service hours in Marin County will be provided on small buses.

In addition to providing vehicles, facilities, and drivers, Golden Gate Transit provides a number of additional “mission critical” services that are included in the contract costs. These include:

- Operations of storage and maintenance facilities
- Line management and supervision
- Grant applications, management and accounting, including responsibility for federal funds
- Telephone, internet, and schedule book information for the local and regional system.
- Printing of transfers, tickets
- Fare handling and accounting
- Scheduling and run-cutting

These functions would need to be accounted for in any future operations contract. The total contract cost for fixed route service in 2006-07 is projected to be approximately \$14M per year, exclusive of MCTD overhead.

Fare Policies

Local transit fare for trips within the County is currently \$2.00 per ride. A 20-ticket book can be purchased at an average ride price of \$1.80. Youth,² senior and disabled riders pay \$1.00 per ride. Passengers transferring from one local route to another may do so on a time limited basis without paying an additional fare. Passengers traveling outside the County pay an incremental fare for their additional travel distance.

Rural Service

MCTD contracts with Whistlestop Wheels to provide two local transit routes connecting the more rural part of the county with the urbanized area. Four daily round trips are provided on weekdays from Bolinas to Marin City, and from Inverness to San Anselmo. All vehicles are accessible and can accommodate bicycles. The route is operated with small buses painted with the West Marin Stagecoach name and logo.

The fare for this service is expected to increase to \$2.00, with a 50% discount available to seniors, youth and persons with disabilities; bringing it line with local transit fares. Free transfers to other local Marin routes are offered to Stagecoach riders. Transfers to regional routes for service outside the county require an additional fare.

In addition to the West Marin Stagecoach, MCTD contracts with Golden Gate Transit to provide seasonal weekend service from Marin City to Stinson Beach (Route 63). This route is

² The \$1.00 youth fare was implemented in August 2005, replacing the District's free school ticket program for participating schools. Low income students are provided free tickets under an MCTD pilot program.

in operation from the middle of March through the middle of November, with extended service to Audubon Canyon Ranch from mid-March until mid-July. Fares for this service are the same as for local transit service.

School Transportation

MCTD and Golden Gate Transit currently provide 12 school routes throughout the County, including three routes that were historically provided by Golden Gate Transit under direct contract to local schools.

MCTD made a number of service adjustments for the 2005-06 school year, based on a productivity standard requiring 20 passengers per trip for school trips. MCTD also adopted a school service coverage standard of providing a route within ¼ mile of a school and 20 minutes of bell time for middle and high schools. School system improvements recommended in the SRTP are designed to meet this new standard of coverage.

Paratransit Service

Paratransit service is specialized curb-to-curb service offered to individuals who are unable to use fixed route transit services due to disability. Two primary types of paratransit service are offered in Marin County:

- Whistlestop Wheels offers door-to-door service to individuals who meet the eligibility requirements for service under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). Whistlestop provides both the services mandated by the ADA and additional service outside of the ADA required service area. This service is described in detail in Chapter 5 of this report.
- EZ Rider provides a flexible route and

demand responsive service, primarily targeted to seniors and persons with disabilities riding within Novato.

To be eligible for the countywide paratransit program, riders must be certified as eligible under the American's with Disabilities Act, which bases eligibility on whether an applicant has a disability that makes it impossible to use an accessible fixed route. The ADA spells out a number of very specific criteria that every public transit operator must meet in providing paratransit service. These are listed in Figure 1-9, along with a brief description of the actual service provided by Whistlestop Wheels.

Whistlestop Wheels local paratransit service exceeds the mandated ADA requirements in several respects:

- **Service Area:** Service is provided to trip origins and destinations throughout the built-up areas of Marin. As shown in Figure 1-10, the locations served include many that are beyond the three-quarter-mile corridors required by ADA.

The figure also shows that the 101-corridor is an area where MCTD and Golden Gate Transit both have an ADA obligation. Local trips that begin and end within this area of shared ADA responsibility account for 33% of all local paratransit trips provided by Whistlestop Wheels.

- **Fare:** The \$2.00 fare for ADA-mandated service is equal to the basic adult fare for local transit service. According to ADA regulations, the fare for mandated paratransit could be as high as \$4.00. For trips that begin or end in the "extended" service area (more than three-quarters of mile from any local route that is operating at the time of the trip), a higher fare of \$2.50 is charged. ADA sets no maximum fare for these non-mandated trips.

Figure 1-9 ADA Requirements and Whistlestop Wheels Service

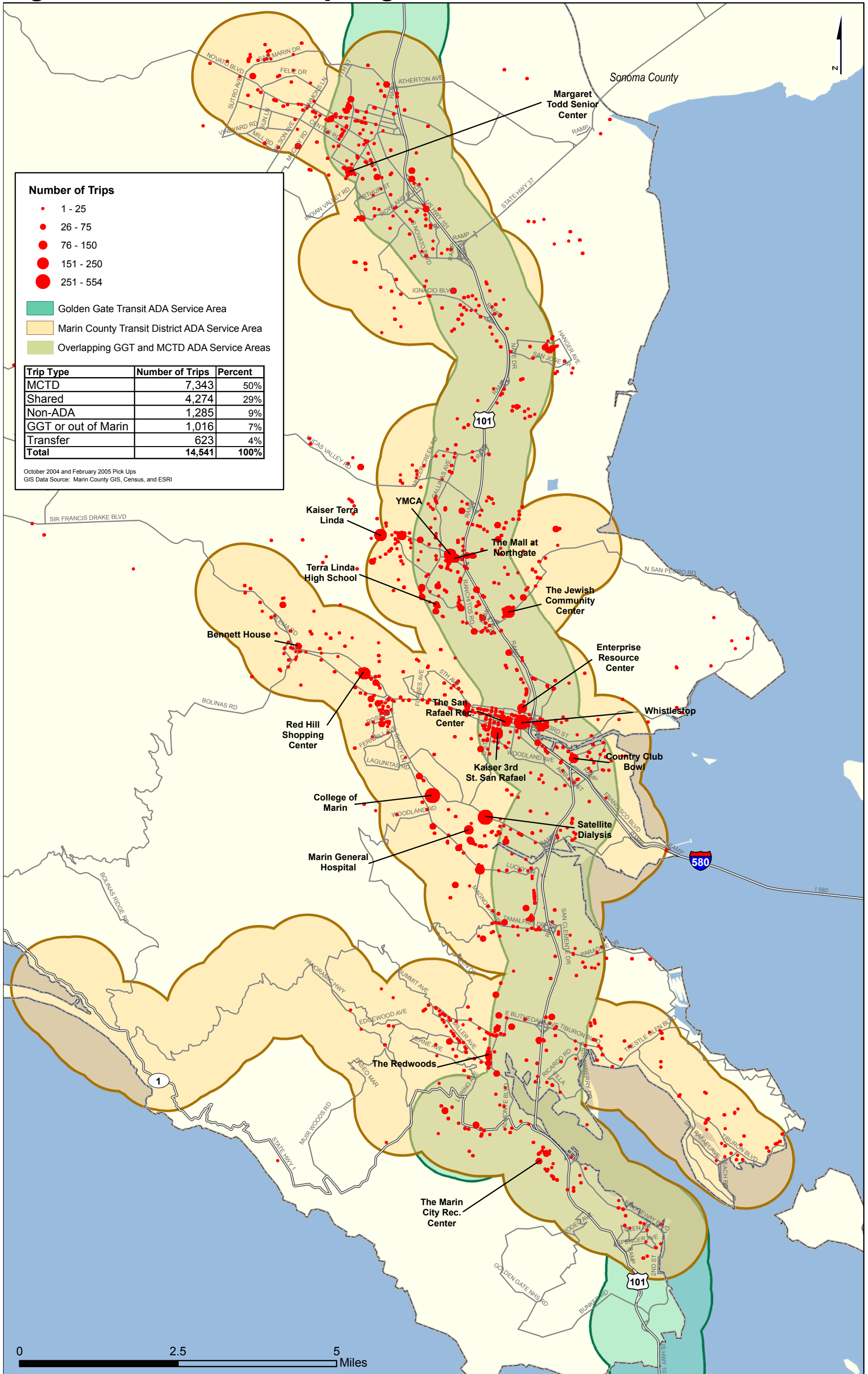
Criterion	ADA Requirement	Whistlestop Wheels Service
Eligibility	Limited to people who are prevented by a disability from independently using fixed-route services.	Limited to people who meet ADA eligibility criteria.
Fare	No more than twice the basic adult fixed-route fare.	\$2.00 for mandated ADA service; \$2.50 for “extended” service (see Service Area).
Service Area	Three-quarters of a mile around non-commuter, fixed-route service when each route is operating.	Serves the required area plus “extended” service beyond the required area throughout east Marin County..
Hours of Service	Same as fixed-route in each area.	Serves the required hours.
Trip Purpose	No priorities or restrictions are permitted except for subscription service.	Priority & restrictions service is as required. Subscription is limited to life-sustaining purposes, primarily dialysis.
Reservations	Taken during regular business hours, seven days a week, one day in advance.	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, seven days a week, one to seven days in advance.
Capacity constraints	Prohibited, including substantial numbers of trip denials, late pick ups, excessively long trips, or long telephone hold times.	No trip denials on ADA required trips since December 2003. Denials for non-mandated trips vary, but are estimated at up to 25% of requested non-mandated trips.

- **Reservations:** In addition to accepting reservations one day in advance as required, Whistlestop Wheels takes reservations up to seven days in advance and also accepts a very limited quantity of subscriptions for life-sustaining trips, mainly dialysis. Both of these practices are specifically permitted by the regulations and are very common among paratransit operators, but neither is required. For trips in the extended service area, reservations are taken on a standby-basis.

One other way in which Whistlestop Wheels paratransit exceeds ADA requirements is that drivers assist passengers between the vehicle and the front door of their origin or destination. This is called “door-to-door” service. It is optional under ADA, which also permits systems to provide “curb-to-curb” service in which drivers only assist passengers with boarding and alighting from the vehicles.

In Novato, EZ Rider extends the reach of paratransit service by providing a combination demand responsive and flex-route service, primarily targeted to seniors in Novato. This service is important because it serves individuals who may be frail and no longer driving but who do not qualify for transportation under the ADA eligibility rules. In addition, EZ Rider and similar services may relieve pressure on the mandated paratransit system by supplementing the system in areas that are beyond the mandated service “footprint,” where high trip denial rates occur. EZ Rider fares are the same as local paratransit fares, and the systems may be used interchangeably depending on where capacity is available.

Figure 1-10: Paratransit Trip Origins



Paratransit Performance and Trends

The demand for paratransit has been increasing. As shown in Figure 1-11, the number of passenger trips provided has increased a total of 18% in the past five years. In the same period, vehicle revenue hours of service increased by only 2%, so that productivity increased from 1.85 passengers per revenue vehicle hour in 2000-01 to 2.14 passengers per revenue vehicle hour in 2004-05. This means that Whistlestop Wheels was able to schedule and provide 15% more trips in each vehicle hour in 2004-05 than in 2000-01. Staff attribute this improvement to new scheduling software installed in November 2002, and increased proficiency with this software since then. Better retention of employees through better wages has also contributed to the productivity gain, as their skills and experience have allowed them to better optimize the schedules.

Figure 1-11 Paratransit Trips and Vehicle Hours

	Passenger Trips*	Revenue Hours	Passengers per RVH
FY 2000-01	70,293	37,930	1.85
FY 2001-02	76,122	37,769	2.02
FY 2002-03	76,609	37,812	2.03
FY 2003-04	83,764	38,820	2.16
FY 2004-05	83,961	39,197	2.14

*Excluding attendants and companions of ADA-eligible riders.

Other Transit Services in Marin County

Marin County residents benefit from a number of additional transit and paratransit services that are not currently part of the MCTD system.

While this is not intended to be a comprehensive list, the following are services with which MCTD coordinates:

Regional Fixed Route Bus and Ferry Service:

MCTD’s local transit network is entirely interdependent with the regional services provided by Golden Gate Transit. The two systems combine to maximize the service available to Marin County residents with the minimal number of resources by eliminating duplications and allowing each system to do what it does best. MCTD’s service is designed to make timed connections to the regional network in Marin City, San Rafael and Novato, and to a lesser extent in San Anselmo. Many people use the regional service to make entirely local trips within Marin County. In fact, over half of the trips on the all-day regional routes have origins and destinations within the County. The system design encourages this interdependence, resulting in maximum mobility for both the local and regional markets.

Specifically, Golden Gate Transit provides three fixed route services to Marin County that interact with MCTD’s local service:

- A link between San Rafael, Richmond and El Cerrito (Route 40/42)
- A route that serves Bridgeway in Sausalito, and continues into San Francisco (Route 10)
- A route along the entire length of the Highway 101 corridor within Marin County and extending beyond the county line on either side. It serves all of the major transfer centers in Marin County and all freeway bus pads. It continues into San Francisco to the south and the Route 80 portion extends north into Sonoma County. The combined Route

70/80 runs every 30 minutes during most of the day. It is often referred to as the “trunk line” or “corridor service” because it serves as the backbone of the District’s route structure.

It is important to note that most of MCTD’s fixed route system schedules are designed around timed connections with the trunk service.

- MCTD also provides local connecting service to the Golden Gate and Blue and Gold Ferries. Local transit connections are made at the Larkspur, Sausalito and Tiburon ferry terminals which provide services to San Francisco

Local Shuttles and Paratransit Services

A number of local shuttles provide critical resources to Marin’s residents. These include:

Hamilton Shuttle: A community service shuttle designed to ease congestion in the Hamilton residential development in Novato. The shuttle runs only during commute hours (5:30 to 9:00 am and 4:00 to 7:00 pm). The shuttle has timed stops along a designated loop, and each loop either begins or ends at a Park and Ride or bus stop location so that riders can catch fixed-route transit. This shuttle service is free and open to the public.

County Connection: A shuttle between the San Rafael Transit Center and the County Human Services Center. This free shuttle is operated by a private contractor under contract to Marin County. The service is operated with an accessible 15-passenger van provided by the contractor.

Muir Woods Shuttle: This demonstration project is a cooperative venture of the County of

Marin and the National Park Service. Summer weekend service is contracted through Golden Gate Transit and is provided every 30-minutes during most of the day from Marin City and local Park and Ride lots to Muir Woods. The project is funded for three summers, ending in 2007.

Marin Airporter: This private service provides regularly scheduled and demand responsive services to Bay Area airports. Passengers may park and ride at the Airporter’s San Rafael facility or may be picked up at locations within Marin County.

Privately Contracted Paratransit Shuttles: A number of senior residences and other facilities in Marin County provide transportation for their residents or program participants. These include the Parnow Shopper serving seniors and persons with disabilities living in a residential facility in Santa Venetia, the Redwoods Shopper, serving residents of the Redwoods in Mill Valley, and services contracted by Senior Access Adult Day Health program.

CHAPTER 2 SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

This chapter provides a high level summary of system performance data based on original data collected for the Short Range Transit Plan. More detailed performance information can be found in the System Level Analysis and Line-by-Line Analysis documents that supplement this plan.

Performance Trends

Figures 2-1 to 2-3 show historic performance trends for the fixed route, rural and paratransit services provided by MCTD. Data for this table comes from the contract operators that provide the service; Golden Gate Transit for fixed route services and rural route 63; Whistlestop Wheels for paratransit services and the West Marin Stagecoach.

Figure 2-1 Historic Performance, Fixed Route

Fiscal Year	Revenue Hours	Pax Trips	Fare Revenue	Marginal Expense	5% TDA
2000-2001	54,033	1,711,798	\$1,569,540	\$1,917,591	\$489,200
2001-2002	56,813	1,863,051	\$1,680,041	\$2,108,026	\$555,200
2002-2003	63,714	1,781,067	\$1,662,648	\$2,330,295	\$420,269
2003-2004	74,686	1,955,512	\$1,781,688	\$6,585,052	\$2,288,896
2004-2005	82,803	2,248,744	\$2,214,667	\$9,476,626	\$3,049,167

Note: This includes rural Route 63

Figure 2-2 Historic Performance, West Marin Stagecoach

Fiscal Year	Total Miles	Total Hours	Pax Trips	Fare Revenue	Total Cost Per Hour	Total Cost
2000-2001	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2001-2002*	6,633	330	1,203	\$628	\$35.00	\$11,541
2002-2003	104,002	5,673	20,385	\$19,033	\$35.00	\$198,555
2003-2004	98,709	5,958	22,588	\$21,510	\$40.01	\$238,336
2004-2005	97,937	5,914	21,539	\$19,970	\$46.84	\$276,988

* The stage routes began operation during the 2001-2002 fiscal year.

Figure 2-3 Historic Performance, Paratransit

Fiscal Year	Total Miles	Total Hours	Pax Trips	Rev Miles	Rev Hours	Fares Revenue	Hourly Rate	Admin Costs*	Total Cost Per Hour	Total Cost
2000-2001	673,454	43,314	70,293	595,748	37,930	\$86,131	\$34.85	\$0	\$34.85	\$1,509,480
2001-2002	717,713	43,895	76,122	632,510	37,769	\$90,733	\$21.62	\$65,018	\$23.10	\$1,014,023
2002-2003	718,936	44,469	76,609	631,920	37,812	\$91,576	\$23.62	\$77,285	\$25.36	\$1,127,648
2003-2004	746,040	44,567	83,764	668,093	38,820	\$123,238	\$26.53	\$81,267	\$28.35	\$1,263,636
2004-2005	727,165	45,364	83,961	651,120	39,197	\$164,006	\$29.92	\$87,305	\$31.84	\$1,444,588

* First year administrative costs included in hourly rate.

Evaluating trends on the fixed route system is difficult because the system has changed substantially since 2003. As described in the previous chapter, local service hours have doubled since 2003, as MCTD added many new routes that were formerly part of the larger regional system. With a new five year contract beginning on May 1, 2006, MCTD's local service should begin a period of relative stability which will enable the agency to better evaluate its performance over time.

Peer Comparison

MCTD must also be cautious in comparing its service to others. While peer systems have been identified based on their size and services offered, no single system can be thought of as a "perfect match" for Marin County's local system. Peers were selected because they are comparable to MCTD in terms of size, service area, relation to urban centers, or mixture of local and regional service. No one system matches all of MCTD's unique operating conditions and challenges. Some, such as the Mendocino MTA and Sonoma County Transit, are geographically similar but devote a much

larger share of their resources to low ridership rural service. VTA and SamTrans are in many ways the most analogous to MCTD, but operate larger systems in more urban areas. With the transition of all local service to MCTD, the District will be among the 20 largest districts in the state and will be among the five largest not directly serving a major urban city.

Figure 2-4 compares MCTD's performance against peer operators. While MCTD's costs appear to be higher than many peer agencies, it is important to recognize the differences between operators. MCTD's costs include the capital required to operate the system, such as vehicles and maintenance facilities as part of the operating cost. This is very unusual, since most agencies own their own vehicles and most own their own facilities. In addition, although many of the peers utilize contract operators, MCTD is unusual in that it contracts with another public agency with existing labor agreements and other policies that may impact unit costs. A better measure of comparison is the subsidy per passenger trip, which shows MCTD as competitive compared with its peers.

Figure 2-4 MCTD Fixed Route Peer Data

*Does not include paratransit costs
For local service only (no regional service)*

Agency	Productivity (passengers per hour)	Cost effectiveness (subsidy per passenger trip)	Cost per hour (operating cost/service hours)	Farebox recovery ratio (operating costs/farebox revenue)	Average Fare (farebox revenue/passengers)	Adult Fare (one way, 2005)	Annual Service Hours	Passengers per year
MCTD <i>2004-05 data. Includes MCTD local routes. Does not include transitional, West Marin Stage, EZ Rider, or school routes 117, 123, or 127</i>	27	\$3.34	\$116.00 (\$110 effective 5/1/06)	22%	\$0.94	\$2.00	110,800	2,905,000
Mendocino MTA	10	\$4.15	\$54.00	20%	\$1.05	\$0.75	33,000	342,000
Union City Transit	12	\$4.20	\$58.00	14%	\$0.69	\$1.25	37,500	442,000
LAVTA	15	\$3.87	\$69.00	18%	\$0.86	\$1.25	132,000	1,921,000
Central Contra Costa	15	\$4.07	\$75.00	19%	\$0.93	\$1.50	302,500	4,509,000
Tri Delta	15	\$3.54	\$65.00	18%	\$0.77	\$1.00	148,000	2,225,000
Sonoma County Transit	15	\$4.83	\$91.00	18%	\$1.07	\$1.00	90,400	1,390,000
Napa Vine	17	\$2.84	\$60.00	19%	\$0.68	\$1.00	51,600	881,000
Fairfield Suisun	18	\$3.30	\$72.00	19%	\$0.76	\$1.25	49,000	874,000
YoloBus <i>Excludes regional service to Sacramento</i>	21	\$2.95	\$83.00	24%	\$0.95	\$1.50	7,800	166,000
Monterey-Salinas	22	\$2.35	\$74.00	29%	\$0.98	\$1.75	211,000	4,696,000
Santa Cruz	25	\$3.34	\$107.00	20%	\$0.86	\$1.50	241,000	6,136,000
SamTrans <i>Excludes approximately 85% of service to San Francisco</i>	26	\$3.57	\$112.00	19%	\$0.82	\$1.25	503,000	12,830,000
VTA <i>2004 data, excludes data from Caltrain, Highway 17, and most express regional bus service</i>	29	\$5.15	\$170.00	13%	\$0.80	\$1.75	1,341,000	38,375,000

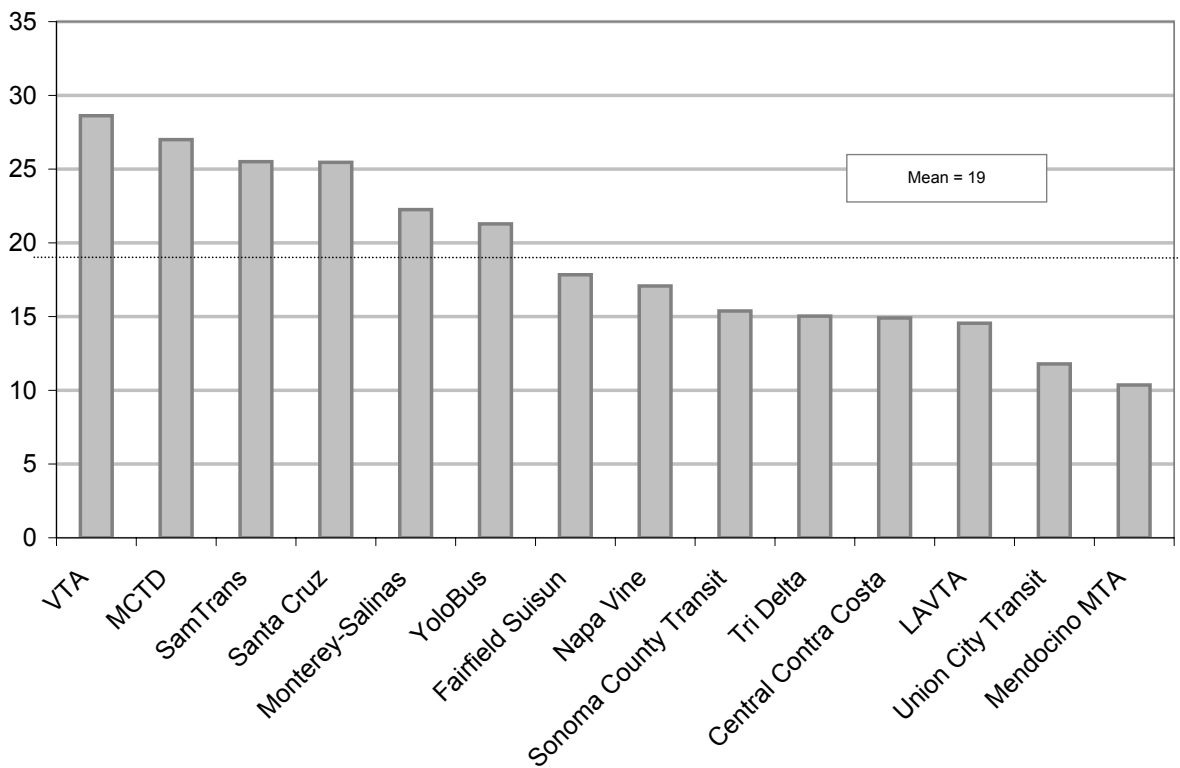
Note: Peer-to-peer comparisons are not relevant and must be approached with caution. Peer data is provided to identify overall trends among systems that operate in similar environments.

Note: MCTD subsidy per passenger trip calculated using MCTD YTD data from 11/1/04 -- 3/31/05. Productivity calculated using YTD (7/1/04--3/31/05) Transtat data. Peer system data from National Transit Database.

Productivity

Figure 2-5 compares productivity, measured in passengers per revenue hour for each of the peer systems. MCTD's local service does very well compared with all peer systems that provide substantial amounts of local service in low-density environments. In fact, MCTD's productivity of 27 passengers per hour (excluding school service and transitional routes) is second only to the VTA, and is the most productive system of its less urban peers.

Figure 2-5 Productivity in Passengers per Hour



Subsidy Per Passenger Trip and Farebox Recovery

Figure 2-6 shows the average subsidy per passenger trip for fixed route transit only. While MCTD has the highest local fare, at \$2.00 per passenger, its average fare is under \$1.00 (about \$0.97). This is due to a high volume of transfers and free fares that had historically been provided through the Ride and Roll Program and Homeward Bound. Meeting farebox recovery targets requires capturing more of the fares in the farebox. The Ride and Roll program was modified in August 2005 to eliminate many of the free fares, instituting a \$1.00 youth fare for all trips. MCTD's subsidy of \$3.34 per passenger is still below the peer mean of \$3.68, in spite of the higher cost of service.

Closely linked to the subsidy per passenger trip is the percent of farebox recovery. Figure 2-7 shows the farebox recovery ratio of peers. At 22% farebox recovery, MCTD recovers more of its total operating cost from the farebox than most of the peers studied. Only Monterey-Salinas Transit and YoloBus recover more.

Figure 2-6 Peer System Comparison Subsidy Per Passenger Trip

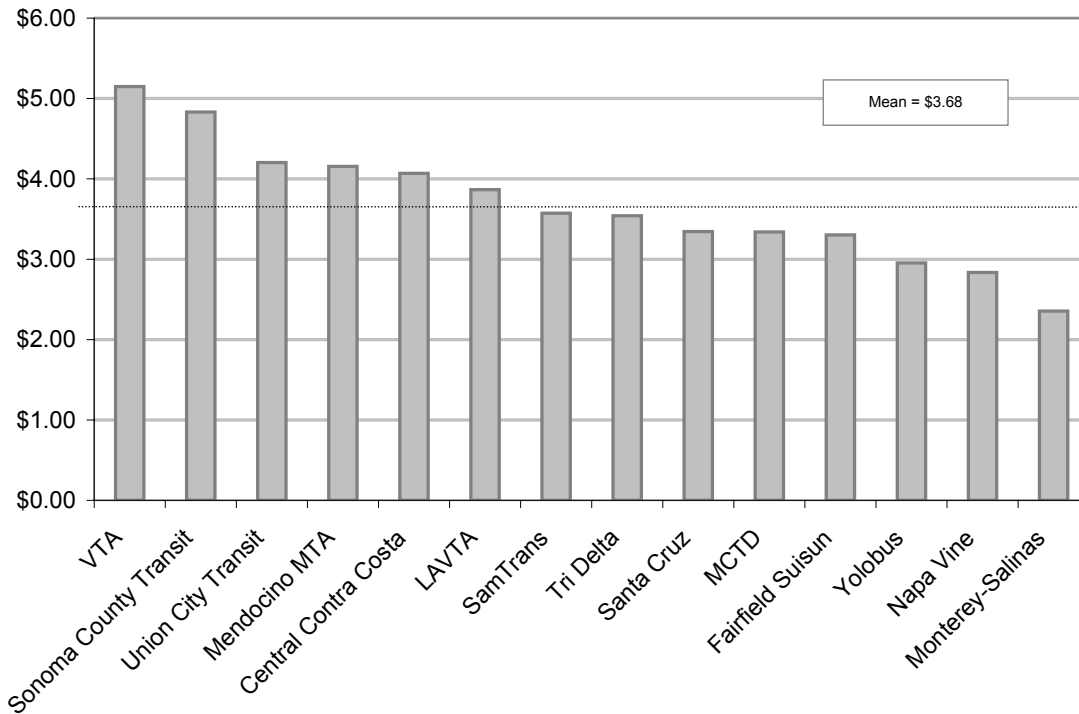
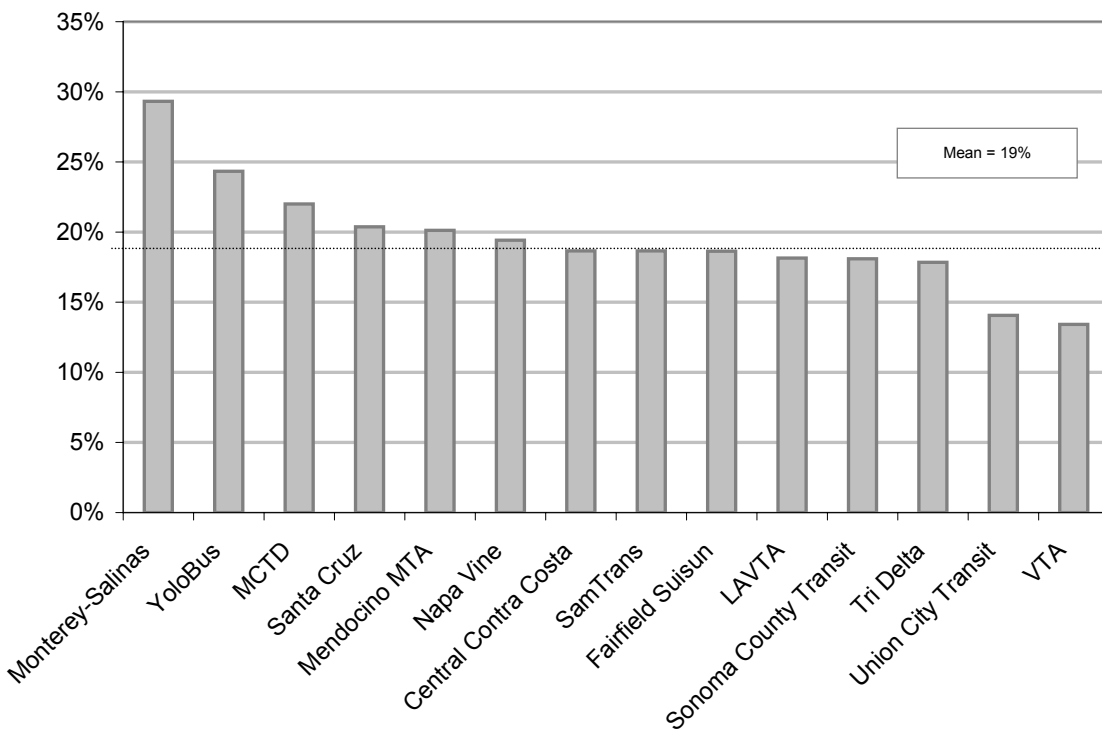


Figure 2-7 Peer System Comparison Farebox Recovery Ratio



Line Level Performance

While the previous sections showed that the MCTD system overall compares favorably with many peer systems, route-by-route performance varies widely. Figure 2-8 shows route level performance for each of the fixed routes operated by MCTD.

Two primary measures of the return on investment for a transit service are system productivity, measured in passengers per hour, and subsidy per passenger trip, which takes into account both the productivity and the cost for a unit of service. In both cases, the range across the MCTD system is extraordinary – the most productive route, Route 35 carries 95 passengers per hour, while the least productive route, Route 21 carries only 4 passengers per hour.

Figure 2-8 MCTD Performance Measures

Local Routes		Productivity	Rank	Cost Effectiveness	Rank	Congestion Relief	Gap Closure	Regional Connectivity	Environmental Justice	Youth	Seniors	Transit Dependent Riders
		Passengers/Hour		Subsidy/Passenger Trip		Average Daily Peak Passengers	Provides unique service	Connections	Low-Income Ridership (% of riders from households with <\$25,000 income)	Youth Ridership (% of riders < age 18)	Senior Ridership (% of riders > age 65)	% of riders without access to an auto
15	Tiburon MC daily	18	8	\$5.28	7	219	Yes	Ferry, Marin City	48	12	4	76
21	Strawberry COM daily	4	13	\$29.13	13	15	No	Strawberry	67	30	0	90
22	San Anselmo Sausalito daily	25	4	\$3.68	3	395	Yes	San Rafael, Ferry, Marin City	42	5	6	73
23	Fairfax/ SRTC daily	20	6	\$4.96	6	396	No	San Rafael	41	28	5	76
29	San Anselmo/ SRTC daily	17	10	\$5.91	8	245	No	San Rafael, Ferry	42	3	8	78
33	Santa Venetia/ SRTC daily	16	11	\$6.33	10	67	Yes	San Rafael	80	38	0	87
35	Canal/ SRTC daily	95	1	\$0.02	1	1042	No	San Rafael	74	14	1	84
36*	Canal/ MC daily	36	3	\$3.58	2	607	Yes	San Rafael	71	9	1	80
53*	San Marin daily	19	7	\$8.61	12	73	Yes	Novato	38	50	0	88
55	Ignacio daily	16	12	\$6.00	9	61	Yes	Novato, S. Novato	33	74	0	73
57*	SRTC/ Novato daily	18	9	\$8.22	11	314	No	San Rafael	64	21	<1	90
59	SRTC/ Novato daily	21	5	\$4.83	5	255	No	San Rafael, Novato, S. Novato	40	25	0	64
71*	Novato/ SRTC/ MC daily	37	2	\$3.72	4	296	No	San Rafael	65	5	5	78
Average		26		\$4.02		232						

* Transitional route

MCTD School Routes

107	Sausalito/ St Hilary's	20	12	\$5.83	11	0	No	Marin City				
113	Corte Madera/ RHS	32	8	\$2.72	5	62	No					
115	Tiburon/ RHS	34	6	\$2.51	3	0	No	Strawberry				
125	Lagunitas/ Drake HS	28	10	\$3.35	6	6	No					
126	San Anselmo/ Brookside	44	2	\$2.55	4	0	No					
131	SRTC	41	4	\$2.34	2	0	No					
132	Glenwood/ SRHS	10	13	\$13.42	13	7	Yes	San Rafael				
139	Lucas Valley/ TLHS	22	11	\$3.71	7	0	Yes					
143	Sausalito/ THS	47	1	\$2.01	1	0	No	Marin City				
153***	San Marin/ Novato	34	6	\$4.16	8	35	No					
117**	Corte Madera/ NCS/ Hall	29	9	\$6.45	12	79	No					
123**	San Anselmo/ WHS	43	3	\$4.66	9	231	No	San Rafael				
127**	Sleepy Hollow/ WHS	41	5	\$5.17	10	22	Yes					
Average		36		\$4.20		33						

** Golden Gate Transit contract school routes

*** Operated by Golden Gate Transit as part of a transitional route

Rural/ Stagecoach Routes

63	MC/Stinson Beach weekend	8	1	\$16.26	2	0	Yes	MC	16	18	9	55
NA	West Marin Stagecoach	4	2	\$10.12	1	70	Yes	MC	47	25	4	80

System Averages

MCTD all day local routes (does not include transitional or rural routes)	27	\$3.34
All all-day routes (local + transitional, does not include rural service)	26	\$4.02
MCTD school routes (not including those operated by Golden Gate Transit)	32	\$3.19
All school routes (MCTD + Golden Gate Transit contract routes)	36	\$4.20
All routes (All all-day, school, and rural routes)	26	\$4.10

Notes

- Passengers/Hour
 - Subsidy/Passenger Trip
 - Avg. Daily Peak Passengers
 - Gap Closure
 - Regional Connections
 - Low Income
 - Youth
 - Seniors
 - Riders without auto access
 - On-Board Survey
 - NUMBER
- Passengers per hour for all service (including weekends).
 Audited Expenses minus Audited Revenue divided by total passenger trips.
 Sum of average daily weekday passengers for AM peak (before 9am) and PM peak (between 4-6pm).
 Identification of geographical gap if service were removed from the network, notation indicates gap ("Tiburon") or overlapping service ("22").
 Identification of regional service connections along service route.
 Percentage of total valid On-Board Survey responses indicating a total annual household income less than \$25,000
 Percentage of total valid On-Board Survey responders under 18 years of age
 Percentage of total valid On-Board Survey responders 65 years of age and older
 Percentage of total valid On-Board Survey responses indicating they did not have access to a car for trip taken
 NelsonNygard survey conducted in April 2005 on 50% of total daily MCTD bus service trips
 Color and symbol indicate a percentage based on less than 20 valid survey responses; values not expected to be statistically significant.

Methodology for Calculating Subsidy per Passenger and Productivity

- Calculation of subsidy per passenger: for routes under current MCTD financial responsibility, MCTD year-to-date (11/1/04 – 3/31/05) actual cost data was used. For those operated by Golden Gate Transit (transitional routes plus contract school routes), year-to-date Transitat (7/1/04–3/31/05) data was used.
- Productivity calculated using Transitat year-to-date (7/1/04–3/31/05).
- System and route averages for subsidy per passenger and productivity are weighted averages (subsidy per passenger is weighted by passenger; productivity is weighted by service hours).

No school route contained a significant number of valid On-Board Survey responses.

Figures 2-9 and 2-10 show the productivity and subsidy per passenger trip required for each route in the MCTD system, as well as the system average. Only all-day routes are shown in these figures.

Figure 2-9 MCTD Passengers Per Hour

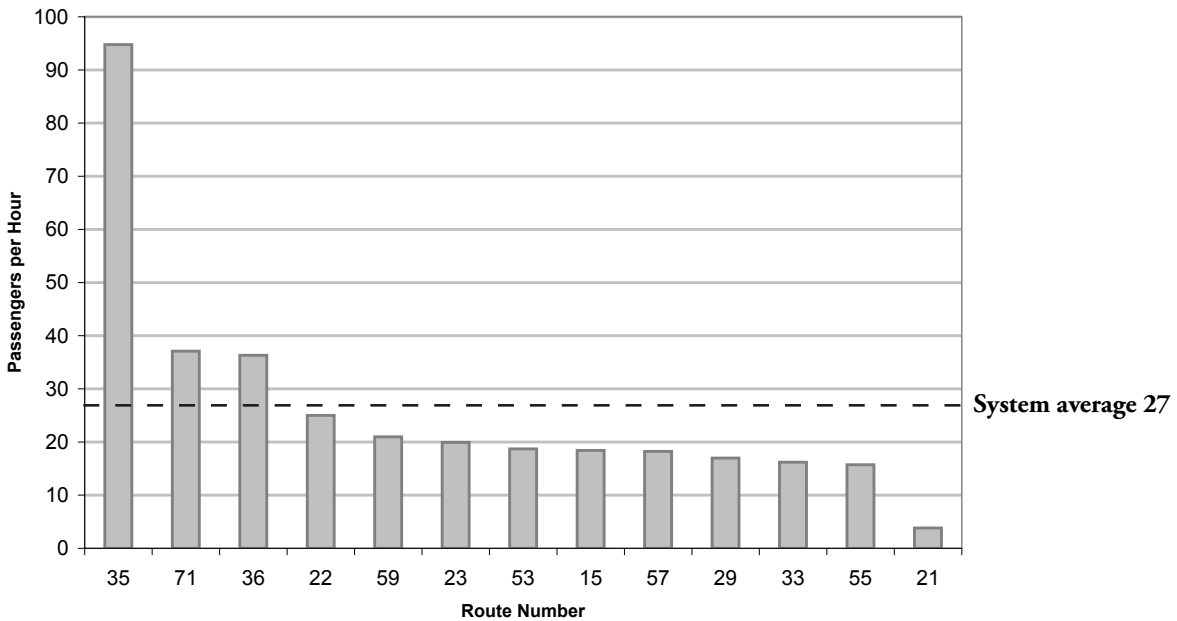
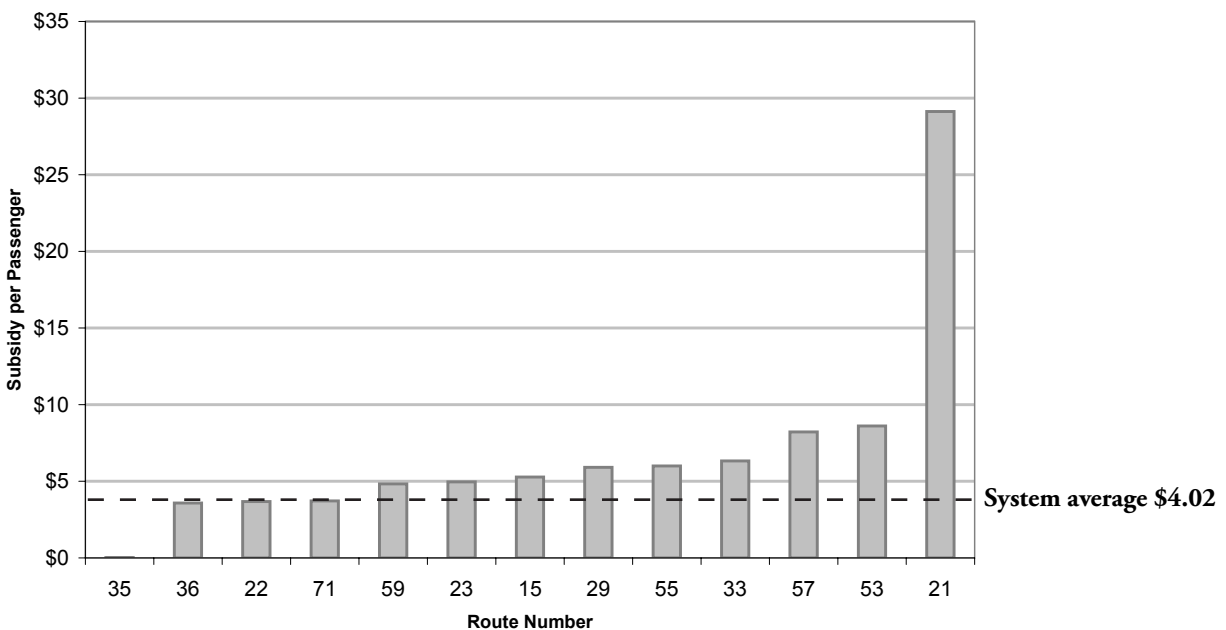


Figure 2-10 MCTD Subsidy Per Passenger Trip



System Performance

Routes Designed for Ridership and Routes Designed for Coverage

While the productivity data for the MCTD system shows a wide range of results, significant variability in productivity and subsidy data is expected in a system of this type. Some routes, like the Route 35 service in the Canal, are designed specifically for productivity – they are relatively fast, straight routes through very dense areas. These routes travel more or less on the same route a person would drive between the same two points. Routes designed to maximize ridership serve the densest parts of the County and stay on arterial streets. However, given the diversity of population and geography in Marin County, it is not possible to provide comprehensive local transit service where every route is designed for high ridership. Other factors, including the need to serve specific markets such as youth, seniors and transit dependent riders, may justify some services that operate below productivity standards. The performance monitoring system, described in the following section, takes into account the need to provide a balanced service, including services designed more for coverage than for maximizing ridership. Maintaining this balance is important to maximizing mobility in Marin County with limited resources.

Understanding Current Riders

As part of the Short Range Transit Plan effort, a survey of over 2000 riders of the MCTD fixed route system and over 500 paratransit riders was completed. Understanding who uses the transit system is critical for maintaining and

expanding ridership, since it is always easier to increase ridership among those who are already inclined to use the transit system than to reach out to entirely new rider groups.

Fixed Route Riders

Most fixed route riders are working age adults using the system to go to and from work. This is not surprising, since trips that occur frequently and at regular times are more likely to be “captured” by transit than other trips that occur infrequently and require the rider to learn a new route or schedule.

The fixed route system has an unusually high percentage of youth riders, with 18% of the system’s riders reporting being 17 years old or younger. While 20% of the County’s population is in this age group, more than half of all youngsters are usually considered too young to ride unescorted. At the other end of the age spectrum, seniors over age 65 represented only 4% of the ridership on the system, although they make up almost 15% of the current population in the County. Long waits between buses, difficulty walking to stops and limited amenities at stops may contribute to the lack of senior ridership, as well as the fact that seniors are not generally making as many routine and regular trips as working age adults or school aged youth.

Most of MCTD’s riders are lower income riders with limited access to autos. Almost 40% of respondents used the Spanish version of the on-board survey, a much more significant percentage than the population of the County would suggest. Over half of survey respondents reported household incomes under \$25,000 per year in a County where just 10% of households

have incomes below \$25,000. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents reported that they did not have a car available to them for their particular trip.

While MCTD's riders are highly "transit dependant" the system still makes a significant contribution to reducing congestion in Marin County. Thirty-one (31%) percent of riders would have generated a new vehicle trip if transit was not available, either by driving alone or being driven by someone else. Applying this factor, MCTD's services replace over 1,000,000 vehicle trips per year.

When asked what improvements would better serve their needs, by far the most common response was for increased frequency rather than new service coverage or expanded service spans. Increasing weekend service and reducing fares were also commonly mentioned by riders as important improvements.

Paratransit Riders

MCTD's paratransit riders tend to be more elderly than those of most paratransit systems. Two-thirds of all paratransit riders reported being over age 75 and one-third reported being over age 85. The population needing services for persons with disabilities is expected to grow significantly over time, increasing from about 4,000 in 2005 to over 6,000 in 2020 according to MTC's Adult Transportation Study.

Paratransit service is offered Countywide; however, the vast majority of riders live in three cities – San Rafael (33%), Novato (20%) and Mill Valley (17%). Paratransit trips can be made for any trip purpose; but medical trips are by far the most common with 85% of respondents indicating they use Whistlestop for that purpose. Shopping and social/recreational trips were also

commonly cited trip purposes.

A high percentage of paratransit riders have very low incomes. Two-thirds of riders (66%) live in households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 and 28% live in households with an annual income of less than \$10,000.

Most paratransit riders indicated that they could not use regular fixed route services even if they were free. Of several changes paratransit riders were asked to evaluate, only local shopping shuttles were supported by a majority of riders. Other changes were not supported by a majority of riders, most of whom want to continue the current service as much as possible.

Performance Monitoring System

The Sales Tax Expenditure plan outlines a number of performance goals that are intended to measure the success of the local transit system:

- Fills a gap in the bus transit network
- Meets productivity standards based on passengers per hour
- Meets cost effectiveness standards based on subsidy per trip
- Relieves congestion as measured in total ridership
- Provides seamless connections to regional service
- Eliminates "pass ups" or overcrowding on existing routes
- Promotes environmental justice based on demographic analysis

- Attracts outside funding sources, including federal, state and toll revenue as well as other local funds

Incorporating these goals into a comprehensive system of performance measures is critical to ensure that the system maximizes mobility for the most people in a system of limited resources.

The performance monitoring system included in this section is based on the requirements of the Sales Tax Expenditure Plan, as well as the values articulated in the workshops held during the development of this plan, and a peer review of similar systems. The general goals provided in the Expenditure Plan are “operationalized” for MCTD – providing specific targets that can be used to measure performance.

This section reviews the standards by which MCTD can judge the effectiveness of its services. Most transit agencies use their performance standards to determine whether a route is carrying enough passengers to justify itself; deficient performance triggers a study process which may lead to remedial actions including enhanced marketing, redesign or elimination of service.

Improvement is needed in some areas to meet the standards identified in this chapter. Standards may need to be adjusted based on the reality of operating conditions or changing values in the system. Performance standards are designed as targets only to be used to measure progress. Performance in any specific area is dependent on many conditions outside of the control of the transit district and its providers. Specific targets are neither a guarantee of performance nor a mandatory requirement, but give the

transit district a goal to strive towards.

The most commonly used and straightforward measure of performance is the standard measure of productivity – passengers per revenue service hour. This measure is broadly used throughout the industry and is included in the Expenditure Plan as a primary measure of transit performance. Routes that fall below this standard should be subject to additional review and potential revision or elimination.

Figure 2-11 provides a comprehensive system of performance measurement for MCTD local routes and shows actual performance of existing routes for the last fiscal year with available data. Data sources are shown in the table where possible. Each performance objective is linked to a Measure A goal.

Areas where substantial improvement are needed, include the following:

- On-time performance, particularly at major transfer centers like the San Rafael Transit Center. Currently on-time performance rates a low 56% of time points within the on-time window, this is particularly poor for a system that depends on timed transfer points. Route supervision particularly at major transfer centers will ensure that the maximum number of scheduled “meets” actually take place.
- Service to schools at bell time. Currently 77% of schools are served by a route within ¼ mile. MCTD plans to work with the remaining schools without service to develop improved service as soon as possible.
- Productivity. Less than half of the routes meet the goal of 20 passengers per hour. Route restructuring focuses on those routes that are performing below this minimum.

- Passenger service ratings. Only 55% of passengers rate MCTD service as “good” or “excellent.”

The recommendations included in the Service Plan, described in Chapter 3 of this plan are designed to improve performance in all of these areas.

Figure 2-11 System Performance Objectives, Measures, and Actual Performance

Measure A Goal	Objective	Three Year Performance Goal	Actual Performance
Fills a gap in the bus transit network.	A. Provide service within ¼ mile of major employers (over 100 employees), schools, colleges, hospitals and other major trip generators in Marin County.	90% of middle and high schools meet standard.	77% of middle and high schools (Source: US Census 2000; County of Marin)
	Provides seamless connections to regional service.	80% of major employers and other trip generators meet standard. New routes do not duplicate existing services but "fill a gap" in the network.	71% of all generators (not including schools) (Source: US Census 2000; County of Marin)
		B. Provide service that provides seamless connections between local and regional service.	95% of all timed connections completed as scheduled.
Meets productivity standards based on passengers per hour.	C. Maximize on-time performance of local transit services.	85% on-time at all time points (0-5 minutes late).	56% (weekday all-day routes) (Source: MCTD/Nelson Nygaard Ride-check Data 2005)
	D. Operate the system in a manner that will maximize system productivity.	95% of all timed connections made.	TBD
		90% of all paratransit trips arrive within pick-up window.	88.6% of all paratransit trips arrive within pick-up window (Source: Whistlestop Wheels, July 2005)
Meets cost effectiveness standards based on subsidy per trip.	E. Operate the system in a manner that will minimize the need for subsidy.	20 passengers per hour minimum for all fixed routes after 1 year of operation.	6 out of 13 routes meet goal (22, 23, 35, 36, 59, 71) (Source: TranStat Data, Golden Gate Transit)
		7 passengers per hour for all local initiative services.	n/a
		20 passengers per TRIP for all special school trips.	71% of school trips meet goal (Source: MCTD/Nelson Nygaard Ride-check Data 2005)
Relieves congestion as measured in total ridership.	F. Operate the system in a manner that will have the greatest impact on congestion.	4 passengers per hour for rural service.	Rt 63: 8 pax/hr Stage routes: 4 pax/hr (Source: TranStat Data, Golden Gate Transit, Whistlestop Wheels)
		2 passengers per hour minimum for paratransit service.	2.14 pax/rev hr (Source: Whistlestop Wheels)
		\$5.00 maximum system average fixed route subsidy.	Meets goal (\$4.10) (Source: TranStat Data, MCTD, Golden Gate Transit)
Eliminates pass-ups or overcrowding on existing routes.	Eliminates pass-ups or overcrowding on existing routes.	Fares to increase at the rate of inflation.	
		Total ridership increasing at least at the rate of population growth in Marin County.	Exceeds goal: Marin population growth (mid-2000 to mid-2003): -0.5% MCTD Ridership growth (mid-2000 to mid-2003): 4% (Source: US Census Bureau, Golden Gate Transit)
		School ridership increasing at greater the rate of student population growth in Marin County.	Meets goal.
		No pass-ups on regular local fixed routes.	Estimated 0 pass ups per year on regular fixed-route service. (Source: Golden Gate Transit)
		No pass-ups on San Francisco Express Routes	Need Data

Measure A Goal	Objective	Three Year Performance Goal	Actual Performance
Promotes environmental justice based on demographics analysis.	G. Operate the system in a manner that will maximize mobility for the County's most vulnerable citizens.	Maintain a balance between routes designed for ridership and routes designed for coverage.	50% rev hours are ridership based. 50% are coverage based.
		85% of all residents in Marin County within ¼ mile of a transit route.	94% of Marin residents within ¼ mile of transit (Source: US Census 2000)
		85% of all census block groups exceeding the County median of senior population served by transit (within ¼ mile).	94 % of block groups exceeding the median senior population are served by transit (Source: US Census 2000)
		85% of all census block groups exceeding the County median of disabled persons served by transit (within ¼ mile)	94% of block groups exceeding the County median # of disabled persons are served by transit (Source: US Census 2000).
		90% of all census block groups exceeding the County median of zero car households served by transit (within ¼ mile).	97% of block groups w/ over the median # of zero-car households are within 1/4 mile of transit. (Source: US Census 2000).
		90% of all census block groups below the County median income level served by transit (within ¼ mile).	93% of block groups below the County median income are served by transit (Source: US Census 2000).
		Meets or exceeds Title IV compliance requirements	Meets goal.
		All Board meetings noticed in English and Spanish	Meets goal.
		All public information available in English and Spanish	
		All meetings to be held in accessible locations that are served by transit (within ¼ mile).	
H. Operate the system in manner that encourages public involvement and participation.		Continued work with Citizens Advisory Committee.	Meets goal.
		Establish School Services Advisory Committee to coordinate bell times and services.	None.
		75% of respondents rate the services "good" or "excellent" in surveys taken at least every five years.	55% of respondents (Source: MCTD/Nelson Nygaard passenger survey 2005)
I. Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with services performed by the agency.	J. Develop a capital plan strategy which 1) seeks to minimize air quality issues and 2) seeks to maximize transit ridership by providing quality amenities and vehicles.	Plan developed	
Attracts outside funding sources including federal, state and toll revenue	K. Maximize outside funding.	Outside grants increase at greater than CPI.	

CHAPTER 3 SERVICE PLAN

This chapter identifies a set of planning principles and proposes a transit plan for local bus service changes aimed at improving system performance. Most of the service changes recommended in the plan are expected to be implemented in the first year of the plan, subject to MCTD's fiscal constraints. Additional changes will be further analyzed in annual reviews and bi-annual updates to the Short Range Transit Plan.

Major Challenges Facing MCTD

This initial Short Range Transit Plan comes at a time of continuing change for MCTD and Marin County. While the passage of Measure A, the half-cent transportation sales tax, provides a major opportunity for the agency to develop a sustainable transit service, MCTD and its partner agencies face a number of critical challenges over the next five years. These challenges include:

- Becoming a mid-sized “full service” transit operator
- Considering the options for receiving federal funds
- Responding to changing demographics
- Managing expectations in a financially constrained environment

Each of these challenges is described below.

Becoming a Mid-Sized “Full Service” Transit Operator

As described in previous chapters, MCTD is transitioning from an era where it served pri-

marily as a “pass through agency” – providing funding for Golden Gate Transit to provide regional and local service – to a full service transit agency, responsible for all areas of managing one of the larger transit systems in the State. MCTD's Board has recently authorized the Public Works Director to develop a Transit Manager position. Ultimately, the District will need staff in planning, finance, marketing, contract management and quality assurance to fulfill its mission. Contract management and quality control will be especially important as MCTD must ensure that the product provided to riders is reliable and well coordinated with regional and corridor services.

The financial element included in this plan assumes staffing increasing to up to 7 full time professionals, gradually acquired over the next five years. Initially, a professional transit manager would be hired. The Transit Manager would then assemble a team with the full range of skills required. Adding staff has an implication for office space and other administrative costs. These are included in the financial plan as well.

The development of a full service transit agency impacts policy makers too. As the Board responsible for local transit service, it will be up to MCTD to fund services that meet productivity and cost effectiveness standards, to maximize the number of riders that can be carried, and at the same time to meet the most pressing mobility needs of Marin County residents, employees and visitors. MCTD will have broader authority to set policy for local routes than they have in the past, and will need to balance demands

to continue to operate within available financial resources.

Considering Options for Receiving Federal Funds

With its new responsibilities, MCTD may choose to become a direct recipient of federal capital funds. This is especially important for the procurement of vehicles, as federal funds generally pay for 80% of the cost of a replacement vehicle. Currently, Golden Gate Transit is the grantee for federal funds on both the local and regional system, with MCTD providing matching funds for buses serving local routes, as required by the new contract.

The advantages of being a federal recipient are obvious. As a federal claimant, MCTD would have control over the allocation of its federal funds, would be able to compete for discretionary grants and would have access to some sources of funds that it does not currently have access to. However, becoming a federal claimant should be carefully considered, especially during the next five years, when Golden Gate Transit will still be the service provider and can provide the entrée to federal funds.

Should MCTD become a federal recipient, it would have to comply with a number of requirements that are currently fulfilled by Golden Gate Transit for both local and regional agencies:

- a. National Transit Database statistics must be kept, which requires an approved program of ridechecks throughout the year. MCTD does not have the personnel, nor the approved plan for collecting and maintaining this data.
- b. Federal procurement requirements will

apply to all purchases made with federal funds. Federal procurement requirements tend to increase the costs and reduce the competitiveness of capital purchases. They also extend the time required to acquire almost anything.

- c. Accounting practices will need to be updated to reflect the federal procurement policies, and this may be costly for the District as well.
- d. Federal audits will be required every three years, looking at every aspect of transit operations and procurement.
- e. All federal regulations, including 13c labor requirements, buy America, and other provisions would apply to all aspects of transit operations in Marin County, regardless of whether an individual service was operated with federal funds.

It is important to realize that by becoming a federal recipient, MCTD does not create “new money” for the region. Rather, MCTD would demand a slice of an already inadequate pie, reducing the amount of funds available for other transit operators in the Bay Area. It is likely that other operators would not support MCTD’s becoming a federal recipient, and MTC, which would first need to approve the status, may not encourage MCTD either.

This is an important policy decision. MCTD can continue to utilize Golden Gate as the recipient of federal funds for the local system as long as Golden Gate is the operator of the local service, and as long as their relationship is a positive one. Continuing to rely on Golden Gate may not be practical over the long term, as MCTD may choose to utilize another operator for all or some of its services in the future. Additional analysis and consultation with MTC and local Federal Transit Administration staff is

required as this decision is made. There is at least an 18-month lag time between the time MCTD makes a decision to become a federal recipient and being granted that status.

Responding to Changing Demographics

The average age of Marin County's residents is rapidly increasing, as people who moved to the County as adults to raise their families are "aging in place". The leading edge of the baby boom will turn 65 in less than a decade. By 2020, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission estimates that 35% of Marin County residents will be over age 65. The high cost of housing in Marin County reinforces this trend, as younger families tend to look to less expensive locations to buy their first home.

The trend towards an aging population will have a profound effect on our transportation system. As baby boomers retire, peak hour travel is expected to decrease, but the need for innovative and flexible services will increase. These services tend to be less productive than traditional transit services and will continue to tax resources. To the extent possible seniors in Marin County need to be introduced to the local fixed route transit system rather than "graduating" from being a car driver to a para-transit rider. The impact of continued aging is not likely to be felt in the short term, but must be a key consideration in planning for the longer term – 2020 and beyond.

Managing Expectations in a Financially Constrained Environment

The passage of the Measure A sales tax created a long-term stable funding source for local transit in Marin County. Without this revenue, local service would be reduced by more than 50%. However, in outreach meetings for this plan, it was apparent that the public remains unaware that MCTD faces on-going financial challenges that will make it difficult to sustain current service levels in the long term. Many people who attended meetings assumed that service levels in place prior to the 2003 service reductions would be restored by the tax, and some will be disappointed by the lack of new service in this plan.

Public education and awareness are critical components of any strategy for the agency, as transit can not be all things to all people. Over the long term, MCTD cannot continue to provide increasing services at costs that outpace revenue growth. While containing costs is critical, it is also important that the public not expect major service increases. The service plan in this chapter is designed to address many of the issues raised by the public on surveys and in outreach meetings. However, in a financially constrained environment, it is simply not possible to meet all demands all the time. MCTD's performance standards are one way to ensure that MCTD is investing resources in the most productive manner.

Until more funding is available, most of the growth to the MCTD system in the near to mid-term is expected to come from expansion of new Local Initiative Service (as discussed subsequently in this chapter) that make better use of community resources.

System-wide Planning Objectives

While the previous chapter identified a performance monitoring system that would be used to evaluate individual routes and services, this section identifies a number of system-wide and area specific planning objectives for refining the fixed route system. If these objectives are met, the system should perform better in virtually every area. The system-wide objectives include:

- Provide increased frequency on key corridors throughout the system to maximize ridership.
- Enhance connectivity so that consumers can ride from any place to any other place in Marin County with no more than two transfers, and the majority of transfers can be timed.
- Allow for appropriately sized vehicles throughout the County, introducing small vehicles on routes where the maximum load will not exceed the seated capacity of a smaller bus.
- Better reflect travel model results for travel demand.
- Enhance school service, especially serving schools that did not meet service standards in the previous plan, and provide better bell time coordination.
- Provide a system that is a better match to the performance criteria identified in Chapter 2.

The service plan reflects area specific goals that were developed in public workshops, from surveys and from working with the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committee, as well as from priority projects listed in the Measure A Sales Tax Expenditure Plan. The list below shows the specific accomplishments of the service plan in each part of the County. Goals that reflect the Measure A priority projects are highlighted:

Northern Marin

- Enhance local circulation – recognizing that over half of the trips generated in Novato stay in Novato – emphasizes small buses in neighborhoods.
- Eliminate the long and circuitous trips on the 57 and 59 routes in favor of more direct trips.
- Create a consistent half-hour service on South Novato Boulevard.
- Provide service to Hamilton.
- New school service to Novato High, Marin Oaks and Hill Middle School.

San Rafael Area

- Expand hours of 15 minute service to Canal.
- Add direct service from Canal to Marin General, and College of Marin.
- Add direct service from SRTC to Mill Valley with convenient connections to the Canal route.
- Single seat ride from Canal to Civic Center, Northgate, and northern San Rafael destinations.
- Fast direct service from Civic Center, Northgate and Kaiser to SRTC.
- Maximize existing County Connection shuttle and create the first local initiative partnership route.
- Maintain peak hour service to neighborhoods that have lost their service due to recent GGT cuts.
- Improve school service to Terra Linda High and schools in Terra Linda neighborhood.

Ross Valley Area

- Direct service from Fairfax to SRTC eliminates the need to transfer in San Anselmo.
- Enhanced frequency on Sir Francis Drake corridor.

- Eliminates low performing Route 21, but retains coverage through new routing.
- Enhanced service to Larkspur Landing.
- **Improved school service to Lagunitas and San Geronimo schools from San Anselmo.**

Southern Marin Area

- **Enhance peak period frequency between Sausalito, Marin City, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Kentfield, San Anselmo and San Rafael.**
- Direct Mill Valley/San Rafael Service.
- **Midday shuttle service through Larkspur and Corte Madera that is a good candidate for local initiative expansion.**
- Direct service from Southern Marin to Ross Valley serving College of Marin and connecting Sausalito, Marin City, Corte Madera, Kentfield and San Anselmo.
- **Improve service to Del Mar Middle School from Mill Valley and Tiburon.**
- **Improve service to Tam High, Horizon Middle School and Mill Valley Middle School.**
- Reduce dependence on Strawberry as a transfer point.
- Improve transfer point at Marin City.

West Marin Area

- **Better coordination between the Stage and High Schools.**
- Eliminate pass ups through larger vehicles.
- Extend the North Route to SRTC.
- Add weekend service where possible.
- Create pilot coastal service.

These local and system-wide improvements do not cover every desire for new transit service identified in various outreach forums. Specifically, many Marin transit riders are interested in

■ = Measure A Priority Project

a broad range of direct services from where they live to the places they want to go. In a system with limited resources, it is not possible to run a bus from every origin to every possible destination. This service plan retains the “hub and spoke” nature of the current system, providing enhanced opportunities to transfer, and limiting the “penalties” for transferring.

Fixed Route System Service Plan

This proposed service plan provides a direction for a major restructuring of local bus services in Marin County, based on the performance monitoring criteria introduced in Chapter 2 and on extensive outreach with riders and non-riders. This plan provides a blueprint, but one that has a degree of flexibility, as additional changes can be made over time within the limits of available funding.

Types of Service

The proposed fixed route system consists of the following elements:

- **Corridor service along Highway 101.** Service along Highway 101, stopping at all bus pads, provides both intra-county and regional service. Some of this service (Route 71) operates solely within Marin County, and will therefore be the funding responsibility of MCTD.
- **All-day local service.** All-day service is designed to provide comprehensive mobility for a range of trip purposes – as opposed to many specialized services. These services run every 15-60 minutes, depending on demand, and are timed to make connections at the major transfer points. This plan distinguishes three types of all-day local service, which differ in their operating cost:

- **“Big-bus” service** is operated with buses similar in size to what operates today: typically 35-40 foot coaches or 60-foot articulated coaches, depending on the peak loading requirements.
 - **“Small-bus” service** operates with a lighter vehicle carrying approximately 22 seated passengers.¹ This vehicle is proposed only on routes where the passenger load typically never exceeds the 22-passenger level. These services may include all-day service as well as a small number of peak period or mid-day only services that fill a critical gap in the transit network but that do not justify all day service.
 - **Local initiative service.** Some services are most appropriately operated with an even smaller bus. These small shuttle routes, which can be operated by 13- or 15- passenger vehicles are generally not designed to meet full productivity standards. These types of services are envisioned as a partnership between local jurisdictions and MCTD, with MCTD providing up to half of the operating cost for the service, designed to serve very local needs. These are services that are intended to be jointly funded by MCTD and another local partner, such as a municipality or another interested agency. Their primary purpose is to provide desired service that could not meet MCTD’s minimum standard for productivity – usually coverage in low-density areas where there is a small but acute transit need. While the intention of this service is to fund needs that are identified at the municipal level, the same tool can be used to create partnerships with other agencies or even major employers that already run their own shuttles, permitting these shuttles to serve other public transit needs in the course of trips they are making anyway. One such partnership is proposed as part of the fixed route plan, combining the current County Connection service with other neighborhood needs. Many others are possible. Local initiative service is discussed later in this section.
- **School service.** Service running only when there is a sharp peak in demand caused by school demand. These big-bus services are designed around school peaks, both to serve these markets and to ensure that they don’t produce overloads on the regular all-day fixed-route system. School service is discussed in a subsequent section.
 - **Rural service.** Fixed-route service in West Marin County has its own funding stream largely separate from the funds devoted to the urban-area fixed route plan. A separate rural service plan is presented in this chapter.
 - **Regional service to San Francisco.** The Marin County Transportation Expenditure Plan includes a priority for expanding the regional transit system while maintaining existing contributions from Golden Gate Transit. As part of this analysis, staff met with Golden Gate Transit staff and completed an analysis of capacity across the Golden Gate Bridge. No consistent pattern of overcrowding was reported on any Golden Gate route over the Bridge. In fact, ridership on the express system has dropped by about 2% over the past year. For these reasons no additional transbay service is recommended at this time, although it may be needed in the future. This should be watched carefully as demand can change over time. The Expenditure Plan requires “Maintenance of Effort” for the application of the sales tax funds to regional

¹ Small bus specifications will be developed in the future.

service. “Maintenance of Effort” may be defined as maintenance of the level of bridge toll and regional revenue available for a particular service on the day the Short Range Transit Plan is adopted.

Route and Frequency Summary

Figure 3-1 is a table showing the frequency, service span, vehicle requirement, and revenue hours as proposed for each route in the service plan. It should be noted that in many cases new numbers are assigned to routes to eliminate confusion between new routes and old ones; however in most cases riders will still be able to use transit to travel between the same points they can currently access.

The following sections describe the major service changes proposed in this plan. The next step in the process of evaluating and implementing these proposed changes will be to work closely with the contract operators to confirm that the proposed routes have sufficient running and layover time, as well as adequate layover locations and facilities.

It should be noted that this plan requires approximately the same number of annual service hours as the existing local service as of the end of the current service contract. **This is the maximum amount of sustainable service without new funding.** Any further additions to service will need to be combined with matching reductions or other changes. Service improvements are offered in this plan primarily by reorganizing existing hours rather than adding new service hours.

Map of Proposed Service

Figure 3-2 shows the proposed service plan, as it would look when fully implemented.

Route Numbering

The proposed service map introduces a route numbering scheme that rationalizes numbers while retaining as much tradition as possible. The table below shows the proposed route numbering convention.

Number	Type of Route
Multiple of 10 (10 to 70, 80)	All day intercounty service
Other two-digit number	All day local route
100-199	School day service
200-299	Peak period year-round service
300-399	Local initiative service

Corridor Service along 101

The 101 corridor has a policy level of service provided by Golden Gate Transit without MCTD funding. This level of service, set by GGT, is every 30 minutes between San Francisco and Novato, and every 60 minutes north of there.

There is more demand for local service on the 101-corridor for trips entirely within Marin County than can be accommodated with 30 minute service. The incremental cost of the additional service required to serve this demand is MCTD’s responsibility. The proposed service plan provides for the same level of service that exists today, roughly every 15 minutes during a long peak period between Marin City and San Rafael (operated as part of Line 36), plus selected additional trips running between Marin City, San Rafael, and

Figure 3-1 Summary of Proposed Service (Excludes School and Rural Services)

Number	Route Name	Vehicle Ride Type	Running Time			Weekdays			Saturdays			Sundays		
			Roundtrip running time (peak without layover)	Roundtrip running time (peak with layover)	Frequency (Peak)	Span (hours per day)	Frequency	Span (hours per day)	Frequency	Span (hours per day)	Frequency	Span (hours per day)		
17	Marin City - Mill Valley - San Rafael	S	106	120	60	15	60	60	13	60	60	12	60	12
19	Marin City - Tiburon	S	52	60	60	13	60	60	13	60	60	12	60	12
22	SRTC - San Anselmo - Marin City - Sausalito	L	128	147	30	15	30	60	14	60	60	14	60	14
23	Fairfax - San Anselmo - San Rafael	L	52	60	30	15	30	60	14	60	60	14	60	14
29	SRTC - Larkspur - College of Marin - San Anselmo	L	100	115	60	14	60	60	12	60	0	0	0	0
35	Canal/ SRTC daily	A	24	28	15	19	15	30	19	30	30	19	30	19
	Canal/ SRTC daily SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE	A	24	28	15	6	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	SRTC - Marin City trips	A/L	77	89	30	8	30	30	2	30	0	0	0	0
45	Kaiser/Northgate - SRTC	L	54	62	30	16	30	60	13	60	60	11	60	11
49	Novato - Ignacio - Hamilton - Grand - SRTC	S	104	120	60	15	60	60	13	60	60	12	60	12
51	Novato local	S	104	120	60	14	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
52	Novato Blvd (Novato - Ignacio)	S	40	46	30	14	30	60	14	60	60	12	60	12
71	Novato - SRTC - Marin City	L	101	116	60	11	60	120	3	120	120	2	120	2
221	Larkspur - Corte Madera Community Route	S	34	39	60	6	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
233	Santa Venetia (all year peak period)	S	48	55	60	7	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
347	County Connection (HHS Shuttle)	V	47	54	60	11	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

L = Standard Large Bus
A = Articulated 60' Bus
S = Small Bus
V = Van or Very Small Bus

Note: Small buses will be introduced over time as fleet becomes available. All routes will be operated with larger buses until small buses arrive.

Figure 3-2 MCTD Proposed Local Service – Peak Frequencies



Novato (now called Line 71) on weekdays and weekends.

The additional services from San Rafael to Novato exist because there are spikes in demand that can cause overloading, but overall demand is not high enough to warrant consistent 15-minute service. These services must be justified by evidence of overloading, and MCTD and GGT will need to establish a procedure for coordination if additional trips are needed.

One of the goals of the Measure A Expenditure Plan is to increase frequency on the 101 corridor; ultimately, creating a 15-minute service travelling the length of the County. This frequent service would attract “choice riders” who would no longer have to schedule their trips around limited bus service. While it might be possible to reallocate available service hours to increase service frequencies on the 101 corridor to every 15 minutes for more of the day, this would come at the expense of asking many riders to make more transfers to get to their destinations. Transfers themselves incur a penalty – when all other factors are held constant, riders strongly prefer direct rides rather than transferring once or twice to reach their destinations. The size of this penalty is increased by the potential for missed connections. In a system with service frequencies every 30 or 60 minutes for most connections, even a small likelihood of missing a connection would carry significant risk for riders.

Taking these factors into account, the proposed service plan balances the need for frequency on the corridor with a need for high quality connections using existing infrastructure. Though upgrading the 101 corridor service to every 15

minutes is a desirable improvement, the MCTD will need significant new funding to operate this upgraded service. As demand grows on the 101 corridor, MCTD is likely to continue to add more service to the corridor to accommodate demand, ultimately making 15-minute service feasible.

Sausalito and Marin City

Sausalito’s route structure is not proposed to change, but its MCTD route would become more frequent during peak periods. Line 22 runs from the Sausalito Ferry north to Marin City, and on to Corte Madera, Larkspur, Kentfield, San Anselmo, and San Rafael. This line would be upgraded to run every 30 minutes during the peak period (on weekdays), returning to hourly service midday. This would double the frequency for travel from Sausalito to most points from Corte Madera north during commute periods, either via Line 22 or via Line 22’s connections to the 101 corridor at Marin City. Route 22 could be extended to the historic downtown and on to Bay Area Children’s Discovery Museum in the Marin Headlands with additional funding.

Sausalito also receives extensive Golden Gate Transit service to San Francisco, including an hourly bus over the bridge (Line 10) and the Sausalito Ferry. These services are used for both local and regional trips.

Mill Valley and Tiburon

The local route for Mill Valley and Tiburon, existing Line 15, is a poor performer, especially on the Tiburon segment. The route is not generally used for travel between these cities, but as con-

necting services from San Rafael and Marin City for employees traveling to work in Mill Valley or Tiburon. The efficient way to provide this link is to provide good service from each city to the 101 corridor, and then good connections to the 101 corridor buses. However, the configuration of the Strawberry transfer point makes this impossible. Strawberry permits easy connections between local buses and the northbound 101 bus pad, but it is almost impossible to reach the southbound 101 pad, resulting in a transfer point that works in only one direction.

A proper transfer point at Strawberry would require a very expensive facility spanning the freeway, which is unlikely to ever be justified given the level of demand out of Mill Valley and Tiburon. Instead, the plan creates a direct connection between Mill Valley and San Rafael, with a connection at Strawberry (off the freeway) to facilitate Tiburon – San Rafael trips.

Two routes, then, would replace the existing Line 15:

- Line 17 would run from Marin City to Mill Valley Depot and on to Strawberry, like the current Line 15. From Strawberry, it would proceed north along US 101, stopping at all freeway pads, to San Rafael Transit Center. This would provide a direct timed connection from Mill Valley to all the local routes serving San Rafael, including major destinations such as Canal and Civic Center. Ideally, during peak periods the line would also directly serve the Canal as there is a strong Canal-Mill Valley commute pattern. However, adding this service would require an additional bus and approximately 3750 additional annual service hours. Should Lifeline funds² or other funds become available, this would be a top candidate for improvement.

- Line 19 would run from Marin City to the Seminary Drive exit of 101, then along the east frontage of US 101 to Strawberry, then along Tiburon Blvd. to Tiburon. For Tiburon, this would provide a more direct service to Marin City and its transit connections – including to San Francisco.

Lines 17 and 19 would be scheduled with each other so that a trip between Tiburon and San Rafael can be made by connecting at Strawberry, with about a 15-minute delay.

Because of Tiburon's low density and obstacles to transit access, Line 19 is expected to remain a marginally performing service, as Line 15 is now. The intention of the service is to provide a good system of connections on which the Tiburon market can develop.

Corte Madera and Larkspur (South of Creek)

A significant frequency upgrade is proposed: Line 22 – which provides these cities' link north to San Rafael and south to Marin City and Sausalito, would be upgraded to every 30 minutes during peak commute periods. This would also double the frequency with which connections can be made to reach San Francisco and other destinations around the county. On a small portion of the route – between the Sausalito Ferry Terminal and Marin City – Route 22 will overlap with the regional Route 10, which will tend to slightly lower the productivity of both routes.

The extremely low-performing Line 21 would be deleted, but most of the areas served would continue to have at least school-hour service, which is the primary form of service demand

2 See Finance Chapter for discussion of Lifeline funds.

in these areas. The new local shuttle Route 221 is proposed to replace the existing Line 21, and would provide year round 60-minute midday service. The change in numbering reflects the fact that this route is scheduled to operate only limited hours of service, but unlike a school route, service would be provided throughout the year. This route would be, like the Route 21 it replaces, a two-way loop through the Larkspur area, going from the Village at Corte Madera, and using Tamalpais Drive, Doherty Drive, and Tamal Vista Blvd. This route is a candidate for expansion into an all-day local partnership route with support from Larkspur and Corte Madera.

For areas along the frontages of US 101, including the Village at Corte Madera, customers already appear to be walking to the US 101 bus pads, which are closely spaced in this area. Because of the disconnected street patterns, any attempt to serve this area from the street (as opposed to the freeway) is destined to be very meandering, and therefore unattractive compared to the freeway service.

Lower Sir Francis Drake (Larkspur Landing, Kentfield, Ross)

Line 29 is the local service for the Lower Sir Francis Drake corridor, continuing west to San Anselmo and east into San Rafael (via Andersen). It is also the service for Marin General Hospital. Although it serves College of Marin, it is not designed to be the fast San Rafael link for the college (Line 22 serves that purpose.) For this reason, and because some spare time is available, Line 29 can be modified to improve the degree of local access it provides. Two routing changes are proposed:

- Operate in the Canal district. Buses are proposed to operate in both directions in the Canal via Bellam, Kerner, and Canal Street (using the same routing as the westbound 35 buses). This would provide a direct link between the Canal and all Lower Sir Francis Drake destinations, including Larkspur Landing, Marin General, and College of Marin.

San Anselmo and Fairfax

San Anselmo and Fairfax are served by east-west Line 23, which connects these cities and then sometimes continues into San Rafael. Line 22 also comes from the south into San Anselmo and continues into San Rafael. Line 23 runs every 30 minutes, and Line 22 is proposed to be upgraded to that level during peak periods.

A major improvement for this area is that on weekdays, all buses from both Line 22 and Line 23 would flow through to San Rafael, eliminating the need to transfer for this trip. Currently, many Line 23 trips do not go through. This change will mean that Line 22 and Line 23 buses will appear to duplicate along the Miracle Mile segment, but there is no alternative to this if we are to provide direct service to both Fairfax and College of Marin making connections in San Rafael.

Canal Area

Because of its high density, the Canal produces the most intense transit demand of any residential area in the County.

The most efficient service to the Canal is Line 35. This articulated-bus route shuttles between the Canal and the San Rafael Transit Center, where customers can connect to reach other des-

tinations throughout the county. This route has exceptionally productive service. Of course, this productivity depends on the existence of many other less productive lines – the other services that Canal residents use to get from San Rafael Transit Center to their ultimate destinations.

Canal residents have sometimes requested direct service to other destinations around the county, bypassing the need to transfer at San Rafael. This service must be approached with caution, for the following reasons:

- Connections are the key to a high-productivity service. Line 35 is productive because you can use it to go anywhere in the county from the Canal, and as a result, many people with different destinations can use the same bus. A system of more direct services would be much less productive, and ultimately harder to sustain in the long term.
- Direct services can make sense if you have a large number of people going to the same destination area at the same time, as is the case with commuter services into San Francisco. Canal area commutes are spread over a wide range of times of day, so it cannot be served with a few specialized trips.

The recommended improvements to the Canal service have these features:

- Expand the duration of 15-minute frequency between the Canal and San Rafael. Currently, service to the Canal is provided every 30 minutes on Route 35, supplemented by Line 36 during peak periods. Midday service is every 30 minutes. The plan maintains midday service but provides long peak periods where Route 35 service is doubled to every 15 minutes.
- Retain the Route 36 through service to Marin City during peak hours. During peak hours, Route 36 will duplicate

Route 35 from the Canal to SRTC and would continue beyond the San Rafael Transit Center to Marin City, bolstering 101 corridor service and providing direct service from the Canal.

- Restore a consistent Canal routing for all trips. All trips to/from San Rafael would loop the Canal district counter-clockwise. Line 36 trips would no longer go through to the Golden Gate Transit base as they do now; Line 29 (see below) would provide this connection.
- Provide direct service from the Canal to Lower Sir Francis Drake Blvd, serving College of Marin, Marin General Hospital, Larkspur Landing, and San Anselmo. Southbound Route 29 buses would operate clockwise through the Canal for this purpose. Northbound Route 29 buses would operate counterclockwise through the Canal. Note that Route 29 is not planned to operate directly to the Ferry Terminal, rather it will pass on Sir Francis Drake.
- Provide direct San Rafael – Mill Valley service, so that Mill Valley can be reached all-day via a single timed connection at San Rafael. This service would also make a safe connection with Tiburon service at Strawberry, eliminating the need for transferring passengers to walk through the Tiburon Blvd interchange.
- Provide direct San Rafael – Fairfax service all day (Line 23), so that Fairfax can be reached all-day via a single timed connection at San Rafael. Currently, two transfers are required to get from the Canal to Fairfax at many times of day.
- By through-routing every other Route 35 bus with the proposed Route 45 (and adding an additional bus to improve reliability), the Canal will gain a direct route to common destinations in northern San Rafael.

In the future, it may be appropriate to add rush-hour express services from the Canal to major employment sites, if there is enough demand to justify the service – including the cost of running empty in the reverse direction. These would always be very limited, however, because of the high cost and inefficiency of one-way commute routes. Peak period direct service to Mill Valley and Tiburon should be a candidate for Lifeline funding, described in Chapter 7. The best way to maximize mobility from the Canal short of adding new direct routes is to continue increasing frequencies – both in the Canal and on connecting routes, so that travel throughout the County can be done with less delay and uncertainty.

Northern San Rafael

Northern San Rafael includes a core of high-ridership destinations, including Kaiser Hospital, the Northgate Mall area, and the Civic Center. Elsewhere, ridership is low except for school trips. Many of the low-ridership areas are also expensive to serve because of discontinuous street patterns. Santa Venetia, for example, is a long cul-de-sac; this means that it's impossible to serve the area on the way to anywhere else, so Santa Venetia must justify any service all by itself, which it is just too small to do outside of school hours.

The proposed service in northern San Rafael consists of three all-day routes, which belong to three different categories: a big-bus service (45), and small-bus service (49) and a proposed Local Partnership service (347). In addition, a year-round peak period service (233) is proposed for Santa Venetia.

Big-bus Line 45

Line 45 would be a big-bus service focused on linking the major high-ridership destinations: Civic Center, Northgate and Kaiser. This line would run every 30 minutes, replacing the most productive part of the current Line 57/59 and eliminating the confusion caused by the two route numbers in this area.

This bus will need to layover at or near the Kaiser facility. MCTD will need to coordinate with Kaiser to ensure that the Route 45 bus will have a place to layover and that drivers will have access to rest room facilities.

Small-bus Line 49

Line 49 would be a small-bus service designed to serve areas that are somewhat harder to reach. From San Rafael Transit Center, the route would serve Grand Ave., Dominican University, Civic Center, Nova Albion Drive (serving dense housing south of Northgate), and Kaiser, then run up 101 to Hamilton and the new Ignacio Transit Center (see below). This line would run hourly, which is appropriate for the secondary destinations that it serves.

Since Line 45 serves the main demand from this area into San Rafael, Line 49 is designed with more attention to the Novato market. It would be the direct service between Novato and Kaiser/Northgate, with much better connections within Novato than are now available. At Ignacio, Line 49 would connect with corridor buses and also with Novato local line 52 (see below). Line 49 buses would also continue into Novato as Line 51, providing no-transfer service between Kaiser/Northgate and many Novato destinations – more than can be reached by the

current through service. Because it is designed around the Ignacio connection, Line 49 would not make timed connections in San Rafael; it would typically pass through 15 minutes before and after the main San Rafael connection times.

Local Initiative Service Line 347

A new type of service has been proposed by the MCTD to provide transit service to areas that, according to MCTD's productivity standards, do not merit transit service. MCTD would work with local communities to design the service, and communities would be expected to share the costs. The amount they pay would be determined by the service's productivity compared to MCTD's productivity standard. Local initiative service is described in more detail in a subsequent section in this chapter.

The County's Health & Human Services (HHS) department currently runs a shuttle, at its own expense, between San Rafael Transit Center, Civic Center, and its office at 120 North Redwood Road, just north of Smith Ranch Blvd. on the east side of the freeway. The idea would be to re-brand this as a general public service and extend it west on Lucas Valley, south on Las Gallinas to Kaiser and Northgate also serving the senior center on Freitas. This would provide inexpensive coverage to most of the area, direct service from the area to both San Rafael and Kaiser/Northgate, and service to Kaiser/Northgate from the HHS office.

This service would provide coverage to areas where demand does not justify regular transit service:

- A deviation to a senior facility at Freitas & Trinity, one long block west of Las Gallinas. Line 59 currently makes an hourly deviation to this point, which requires about 4 minutes and a difficult U-turn to serve. Ridership is very low at this location, consistent with senior ridership throughout the county.
- The area north of Freitas and west of 101, including portions of Marinwood and Lucas Valley. Here, ridership is low and most demand that exists is at or south of Lucas Valley Road.

Considered in isolation, these areas could not be expected to generate anything close to the productivity standards needed to justify local transit service.

However, coverage in these areas can be provided inexpensively through an expansion of the County Connection, a shuttle service currently contracted through the County's Health and Human Services (HHS) Department. This route, identified as Line 347 on Figure 3-2, would extend the current shuttle route, providing extended service hours and covering areas that would benefit both current shuttle riders and others.

In addition to the routing shown on Figure 3-2, Line 347 could potentially travel north on 101, then west on Miller Creek Road, then south to Lucas Valley, and then continuing on Las Gallinas. This possible extension would restore some abandoned service, but these may not be sufficient running time. This route will be monitored to see if this extension is possible.

Although HHS is aware of MCTD's interest in this service, there is no agreement about potential partnership. There would be a number of

hurdles to creating this partnership, including the fact that the current shuttle is free to the County’s facility, and would charge a fare if associated with MCTD. Some sort of special ticketing may be possible to eliminate the fare charge for riders going to the County facility.

If the County and MCTD can come to an agreement, this route would be the first demonstration of a local initiative service partnership. Other similar partnerships are possible in many areas that cannot produce the kinds of productivity that would justify an investment of limited transit dollars. This service would be expected to generate approximately 9 passengers per hour, but would likely not achieve the minimum 17 passengers per hour recommended in the plan.

Peak Period Santa Venetia Service

Route 233 is proposed to provide a small bus year-round shuttle between Santa Venetia and San Rafael Transit Center. The route restores year-round service to this neighborhood by combining school and non-school demand.

Novato

The Novato service restructuring has several objectives:

- Simplify and speed up trips between Novato and points south.
- Provide an extensive circulator route connecting the major destinations within Novato.
- Provide an appropriate frequency to Novato’s highest-ridership corridor, Novato Blvd.
- Serve the major school markets, but do not design all-day service solely around school needs.

Line 51: Novato Local

This hourly route is designed to replace Lines 53 and 55 to form a local circulator covering much of the city. From Ignacio Transit Center, it would serve Ignacio Blvd, IVC, Sunset Blvd, Rowland Blvd., Vintage Oaks, Sutter Novato Medical Center, and S. Novato Blvd. to downtown Novato. On weekdays, it would then continue existing Line 53 to San Marin.

At Ignacio, Line 51 buses would continue as Line 49, providing a no-transfer service to Kaiser, Northgate, and Civic Center.

Line 51 would be a small-bus service. Where large school peaks occur, mainly in San Marin, school service would be added. New school service would be added to serve Novato High School, in addition to current school destinations.

Line 52: Novato Blvd

This route is designed to make a direct trip between the Ignacio area and the transfer point at Redwood and Grant every 30 minutes, eliminating the circuitous portion of the current Line 57/59. This will be relatively frequent, fast, and direct service that can carry the bulk of intra-Novato trips. This route will also be extended slightly northward to Olive Street where it will be able to serve demand from a new grocery store (Trader Joe’s). To the south, it will be extended via Alameda del Prado and Nave Drive to cover a portion of the route of the former Line 59. On weekends, the routing of Line 52 will change to extend to Vintage Oaks, preserving service to this destination on weekends when Line 51 does not operate.

Future Ignacio Area Transit Hub

In the mid- to long-term, there is an opportunity to create a transfer point in the vicinity of the Ignacio Blvd. interchange, either co-located with or adjacent to the proposed South Novato SMART station. Transit service in the area could be designed to take advantage of this transfer facility, providing times meets with 101 corridor service and the higher frequency service of Route 52, boosting the usefulness of MCTD, Golden Gate Transit, and SMART service. A transfer center could also provide a place for employer-funded shuttles and other private drop-off functions that might be needed in the future. Determining the location and design of a future Ignacio Transfer Center will require further study.

Several options for an Ignacio Transit Center are under review. The logical long-term solution is to locate these connections at the future SMART station, so that riders making both bus and rail connections could benefit from the bus hub.

In addition to Ignacio, several locations were considered for a transit center in Northern Marin County including Rowland Blvd, the Highway 37/101 Interchange, and Vintage Oaks Shopping Center. From an operational perspective, the Ignacio area is the best for a transit center for the following reasons:

- The transit center needs to be an average of 14 to 17 minutes from the San Rafael Transit Center for timed transfers to work.
- It is an ideal location for riders from the south to be distributed to areas in Novato and for riders in Novato travel-

ing south to transfer to Highway 101 corridor service. Any other location requires backtracking for many riders, which translates into longer travel times.

In the short-term, MCTD does not plan to construct an interim facility. This means that at the Ignacio area, there will not be timed connections between all directions on all routes. Apart from not being timed, transferring between routes will also not be as convenient as it would be if there were a transfer facility. However, by using existing stops and infrastructure, this short-term plan will allow the service plan in this area to be implemented.

School Services

School services are especially important to the MCTD system. About 17% of MCTD's riders are under age 18, and specialized school service accounts for nearly 300,000 boardings annually.

Home to school transportation in Marin County is handled in a variety of ways. Some schools, especially high schools, are located on arterial streets where they can be well served by regular all-day transit routes. Many schools have supplemental service or extra trips that are added to the regular schedule on school days to better meet bell times and increased ridership.

Some school districts also contract for yellow school bus service. Yellow bus service is especially helpful for carrying younger children because it is permitted to stop on school property and may deny boarding to the general public, which are not allowed in public transit. In contrast, the general public can use MCTD's

school oriented service.

MCTD has recently implemented a new service standard that focuses specialized school service on middle and high schools where ridership is likely to be higher and that ensures that school service is held to a high standard for productivity. This is important because school trips often require “peak pull-outs”, or additional buses during the peak period, which is the most costly type of service.

The standards MCTD has implemented for school service are the following:

- MCTD will attempt to provide school service to public and private middle and high schools in Marin County, where adequate service is designed as a route within ¼ mile of the school, operating within 20 minutes of the bell time.
- Any extra service added specifically to serve schools must achieve 20 passengers per trip.

A number of service adjustments were implemented in the fall of 2005 to address these standards, and to allow MCTD to absorb three high-productivity school routes that had been operated by Golden Gate Transit under direct contract with local schools. Those services are anticipated to remain in effect as long as they meet productivity requirements for the beginning of the 2006 school year. In addition, the following enhancements described on page 3-20 are planned.

It should be noted that a number of changes to the all day local service in Marin County will serve schools better. These are not “school services” per se, but they will accommodate large number of school riders as part of their regular service. These include:

- Increasing weekday frequency on Route 22 to every 30 minutes during peak periods will offer more frequent service to students in Ross Valley, more transit choices to schools along this route, and more passenger capacity. (School service to Redwood High School will not change.)
- The new Route 52 will offer service every 30 minutes on S. Novato Blvd between Ignacio and the transfer point at Redwood and Grant, providing another alternative (with, in some cases, slightly longer walking distances) to dedicated school service in the area.
- By routing Line 29 through the Canal area, it will offer direct service from the Canal area to schools along Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
- Direct all day service every 30 minutes between San Rafael and Fairfax will increase the mobility of students living along this corridor.
- Expanded peak-period schedule of Route 133 will improve school service to students living along N. San Pedro Road in Santa Venetia; the peak period only Route 221 will do the same for students in Larkspur.
- The schedule of the Northern Route of the West Marin Stage was adjusted to better serve students from West Marin.

Description of initial changes to school service

Youth Fare Implementation

In September 2005, MCTD implemented a \$1.00 youth fare, for any trip on any route in the system. This \$1.00 youth fare represents an increase in cost for students who were previously receiving free school transportation under the successful Ride and Roll pilot program; but represents a substantial reduction in fare for

students who were paying the \$2.00 cash or \$1.50 ticket price for rides unrelated to Ride and Roll.

Convenience tickets are available at the \$1.00 price. MCTD provides free tickets to students in middle and high schools who are served by subsidized meal programs. The net cost to MCTD for “free tickets” would be minimal assuming the tickets do ultimately get used in the farebox. Students accepting but not using tickets remains a significant cost to MCTD and further revisions to the program are expected.

In 2006 it is hoped that a convenience pass program can be implemented, including an annual or monthly youth pass.

Additional School Service Enhancements

In addition to the improvements in all day service that will impact schools, additional dedicated school service is recommended for Fall 2006 to help meet MCTD service goals.

- Add the new school Route 155 to provide better service to Hill Middle School, Marin Oaks High School, and Novato High School. This route will connect at downtown Novato and the future Ignacio Transit Center, providing superior access to these schools for students in this area. Implementing this route is dependent on locating new stops.
- Add a morning trip on Route 125 to serve students going to Lagunitas and San Geronimo Schools from the San Anselmo Transit Center.
- Replace Route 131 with Route 233, an all-year service that will have an expanded peak period (morning and afternoon) schedule, offering new service in the afternoon, and will restore service to the

San Rafael Transit Center from Santa Venetia during commute times.

- Modify the routing and schedule of Route 107 slightly to better serve students from Mill Valley and Tiburon attending the Reed School.
- Add new morning service in both directions on Route 143 to serve students at Tam High School, students at Horizon Middle School, and Mill Valley Middle School. The southbound bus would depart from Strawberry and end at the high school. The northbound bus would travel north from the Ft. Baker area, drop students at the high school, then deadhead to Strawberry to provide a southbound trip to the Mill Valley Middle School, and then a northbound trip to the middle school.
- Reroute Line 139 slightly to better serve schools to the west of the Northgate Mall area (Terra Linda High School, St. Marks School, and St. Isabella School) and better serve the Terra Linda neighborhood.
- Where appropriate, make MCTD’s school oriented service even more useful to the general public by running in revenue service (i.e., being available to pick up and drop off passengers) when traveling away from a school at least to the nearest transit hub.

All school routes should be carefully monitored for overloading and the need for additional service.

Cooperation between MCTD and Schools

In addition to the proposed service changes, the plan recognizes that it is crucial that communication between the schools and MCTD be improved, and that both the schools and MCTD recognize the importance of their part-

nership. We recommend that a joint transit-school committee be developed that will meet four times during the year. Meetings before each semester will focus on coordinating school bell and transit times. While MCTD's special school services must be focused on meeting bell times, the schools should also be cognizant of the bus schedules when setting their bell times for the coming semester.

Mid semester meetings will focus on route performance and ridership. Schools will partner with MCTD to provide information to parents and students and will assist MCTD in meeting ridership goals for each school trip.

Local Initiative Service

The service plan has been developed around the principle that all services funded by MCTD must meet performance standards of at least 17 passengers per hour when fully mature, or at least 15 passengers per hour after the first year of service. The lower initial standard recognizes that some routes will take time to develop a following and for riders to learn about a new service.

All services receiving public funds should be held to some standard. That necessarily means that residents located in the lowest density areas of the County will have the least transit service and some areas will not justify MCTD's investment, even though they will have some transit needs.

The service plan recognizes that there are transit needs beyond those that can be served within the productivity standard. These are primarily very local services, within a single community or adjacent communities. These services may be focused around individual rider types, such

as shuttles focused on seniors or on providing circulation in a limited geographic area, such as a downtown area; or they may be designed to penetrate neighborhoods in a way that conventional transit cannot productively cover.

To meet the demand for service at this very localized level, the plan recommends setting aside some funding on an on-going basis for local initiative services. Local initiative services would be planned locally, usually within a single city or two adjacent cities, with the help of MCTD staff. The local jurisdiction would plan the route and write the schedule with MCTD's assistance, insuring that connections could be made at key points and that the route is as efficient as possible.

Although the route would be essentially locally designed, MCTD would manage the service and would market the service along with the remainder of the system. Specific MCTD responsibilities would include:

- Assist with service design and scheduling, making sure that the local needs are met to the extent possible.
- Providing costing assistance based on contracted rates.
- Contract with a "very small bus" provider as a package, with all similar local initiative services contracted together. Alternatively, MCTD would work with local jurisdictions and school districts that want to use existing vehicles for this service to reduce operating costs or make better use of existing equipment.
- Market the local initiative services alongside the rest of the MCTD service, including routes on the system map and providing information about the routes with the rest of the system.
- Provide vehicles either directly or as part of the service contract.

- Manage the service contract and provide regular reporting on how well the service is performing.
- Match local funding for the service on a dollar for dollar basis, assuming that a productivity standard of at least 50% of the overall system productivity can be maintained (7-10 passengers per hour in the urban area). For routes that cannot achieve these standards, MCTD may consider contributing a lower operating subsidy. Ridership data would be collected to determine the route's productivity, and payment for the next period would be determined based on these findings.

This element of the service plan is designed to meet local objectives without impacting MCTD's ability to provide service in the highest demand corridors in the system. It is based on a model developed in San Mateo County for the use of sales tax funds in implementing local shuttles. Local initiative funding from MCTD will be essentially pilot funding to test the market of a new shuttle. Ultimately, local shuttles would become regular transit routes or would be funded with outside funding.

The C/CAG Model

The City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) in San Mateo County established a program for increasing public transit use in local communities, designed to meet unique characteristics and needs. In November 2002, C/CAG awarded its first round of funding to seven cities that applied for these funds on a competitive basis. Approximately \$462,000 was allocated to these cities using a dollar for dollar matching program. Nelson\Nygaard recently completed an audit of these services, which range from shuttles targeted at seniors, similar to EZ Rider, to school and after school

services, to services connecting with regional transit and providing local circulation. The services are summarized in Figures 3-3 and 3-4 summarize the result of this audit.

The audit found that while the operating costs for these services were very low, productivity was also generally very low. None of the routes would have met the local transit operator, Sam-Trans, standards for productivity.

As a result of the audit, C/CAG has developed standards for continuation of existing services and introduction of new services. To receive funds, fixed route services will have to achieve at least 10 passengers per hour and door-to-door services will have to achieve at least 2.5 passengers per hour, with hourly costs not exceeding \$50.00 per hour. In addition, a maximum subsidy per passenger trip was developed, with fixed route costs per passenger not exceeding \$6.00 per passenger and door-to-door costs not exceeding \$15.00 per passenger. Other requirements for connectivity with the regular transit system, and joint marketing were also established.

This system provides a model for local partnerships in Marin County. An initial partnership is included in the service plan that would expand the County Connection shuttle to serve other local needs. Many other routes have been proposed in community outreach meetings that could be served in this way. Expansions of Route 221 in Larkspur and Corte Madera to an all day shuttle, additions of shuttle services in Southern Marin, and expansions of EZ Rider in Novato are all examples of potential local initiative partnership service. Partners could also include private employers, school districts

Figure 3-3 C/CAG Service Standards Overview

Operating Characteristics	Millbrae Senior Shuttle		North Burlingame Shuttle		Foster City (Connections)		San Carlos (SC00T)		Menlo Park		East Palo Alto	
	Senior Door-to-Door	Senior Door-to-Door	Student and Hospital Shuttle	Student and Hospital Shuttle	Midday Shuttle (2 Routes)	Midday Shuttle	Youth/Caltrain Routes	Door-to-Door	Midday Shuttle	Shoppers Shuttle	Senior Shuttle	Caltrain Residential Shuttle
Service Type (Fxd Rte, DAR)	DAR	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	Fixed Route	DAR	Fixed Route	DAR	Fixed Route	Fixed Route
Brief Description	Door-to-Door service for seniors within Millbrae and other select desintations	Connects Caltrain and BART to Mercy High School and Mills Hospital	Red Line follows SamTrans 251. Blue Line connects residential areas.	9 routes connecting homes, schools, after-school activities and Caltrain	Door-to-door service by reservation to any San Carlos destination	1 route (targeted to seniors) from homes to all key destinations; hourly headways (clock schedule)	Door-to-door serving seniors not living on Mid-day route	3 different routes on different days (M/Th, T/F, W) to key senior destinations	Residences to/from Caltrain 7 days per week	3 different routes on different days (M/Th, T/F, W) to key senior destinations	Residences to/from Caltrain 7 days per week	Residences to/from Caltrain 7 days per week
Days and Hours of Operation	M-F, 9am -3pm	M-F, 6-9am, 3-6pm	M-F, 9:30am-3:30pm	M-F morning and mid-after-noon	M-F 6:30 am to 6:45 pm	M-F 9:30 am - 3:30 pm	M-F 9:30 am - 3:30 pm	M-F 6:30 am to 6:45 pm	M-F 9:30 am - 3:30 pm	Weds and Fri 10 am - 1:30 pm	M, T, Th, F 10 am - 3 pm; Weds 10 am - 2 pm	4 runs AM and 4 PM M-F; 3 runs AM and 3 PM Sat/Su
Contracted Service or In-House Operation	Operated in-house with city driver and city vehicle	Operations Contracted to PCA	Operations Contracted to Serendipity	Operations Contracted to Serendipity; Vehicles leased from separate vendor	Operations Contracted to Serendipity; Vehicles leased from separate vendor	Operations Contracted to PCA	Operations Contracted to PCA	Operations Contracted to Serendipity; Vehicles leased from separate vendor	Operations Contracted to PCA	Operated in-house with city driver and city vehicle	Contracted to PCA	Contracted to PCA
Vehicle Information (Vehicle Type/ owned or contractor supplied)	City owned vehicle; 16 pax van with space for 4 wheelchair chairs. Lift Equipped.	Econoline 350 Powerstroke bus, diesel fueled; no wheelchair lift	Champion Diesel Bus. Seats 18 passenger with space for 1 wheelchair	9 24-pax gasoline vehicles with lifts	3 24-pax gasoline vehicles with lifts plus 1 city-owned 15 pax van	2 20-pax diesel cutaways with lifts	2 20-pax diesel cutaways with lifts	3 24-pax gasoline vehicles with lifts plus 1 city-owned 15 pax van	2 20-pax diesel cutaways with lifts	1 14-pax city owned van	20 pax ULS diesel cut-aways with lifts	20 pax ULS diesel cut-aways with lifts
Primary Users of the Service	Seniors	Students, faculty and hospital staff	Students, seniors	Students, teachers, parents, commuters	Seniors, commuters, other residents	Seniors, school field trips	Seniors, school field trips	Students, teachers, parents, commuters	Seniors, school field trips	Seniors	Seniors	Commuters, residents
Annual Ridership	2,836	8,243	40,508	105,000	51,583	20,751	20,751	51,583	20,751	434	1964	6949 (C/CAG funded 3 weekend and 1 extra AM trips only)
Major Trip Purposes/ Destinations	Shopping within Millbrae, medical appointments, scenic drives	Connecting passengers from Intermodal Station to Mercy High School, Mills Hospital	Shopping, school, transportation hubs	Home-school routes (all grades); After-school to Youth Ctr, library, parks and homes; Also service to Caltrain	Taking seniors from their homes to senior center, shopping, etc.; Home to/from Caltrain	Senior center, shopping, Caltrain, hospitals, Safeway	Senior center, shopping, Caltrain, hospitals, Safeway	Home-school routes (all grades); After-school to Youth Ctr, library, parks and homes; Also service to Caltrain	Senior center, shopping, Caltrain, hospitals, Safeway	Safeway, downtown, Stanford Shopping Center	To key shopping and medical destinations	Palo Alto Transit Center (Caltrain, VTA, Samtrans, Stanford Marguerite) & EPA residences
Funding Sources	FTA 5310 funds, AAA, C/CAG, user fees	City contribution: \$23,560; and Mercy HS: \$4,000; Mills Hosp: \$6,000; C/CAG/ SamTrans: \$33,560	C/CAG:\$32,500; C/CAG One Time Congestion Relief Grant: \$27,950; and General Funds:\$4,550	03-04: C/CAG: \$228,000; TFCA \$26,000; Measure A: \$436,713; Gas Tax \$198,400; City general fund \$18,487; Rentals \$2,400-04/05 C/CAG, TFCA, Measure A	Funding included in Youth/Caltrain column	Redevelopment Agency \$50,000; TFCA \$30,732; Local transportation \$49,403	Redevelopment Agency \$50,000; TFCA \$30,732; Local transportation \$49,403	Funding included in Youth/Caltrain column	Redevelopment Agency \$50,000; TFCA \$30,732; Local transportation \$49,403	Funding included in Mid-day column	C/CAG \$34,715; Measure A \$16,215; In-kind \$18,500	C/CAG \$23,390; Measure A \$23,390

Notes:
 Funding Sources for Millbrae and North Burlingame are based on FY 2003-04
 Funding Sources for Foster City based on FY2004-05

Funding Sources:
 AAA = Area Agency on Aging
 C/CAG = City and County Association of Governments
 Measure A = San Mateo Local Sales Tax Subvention to Cities
 TFCA = Air District Pilot Program Funding

Figure 3-4 C/CAG Operating and Cost Statistics

Operating Data	Millbrae Senior Shuttle		North Burlingame Shuttle		Foster City (Connections)		San Carlos (SCOOT)(1)		Menlo Park			East Palo Alto	
	Senior Door-to-Door	Student and Hospital Shuttle	Midday Shuttle (2 Routes)	Youth/Caltrain Routes	Door-to-Door	Midday Shuttle	Shoppers Shuttle	Senior Shuttle	Caltrain Residential Shuttle(2)				
Total Operating Costs	\$23,518	\$67,120	\$99,794	\$460,000	\$450,000	\$119,522	\$10,862	\$70,170	\$46,780				
Breakdown of Operating Costs													
Contractor Cost	\$0	\$67,120	\$97,521	\$392,851	\$385,071	\$116,718							
In House Cost	\$18,931			\$66,699	\$65,379	\$2,804		\$70,170	\$46,780				
Maintenance Cost	\$1,999	included in contract	included in contract	\$16,330	\$16,007	Performed by city		Included in contract	Included in contract				
Fuel	\$2,588	included in contract	included in contract	\$13,410	\$13,144	Included in contract	Provided by city	Included in contract	Included in contract				
Insurance	City Insured	Contractor											
carries own	Contractor												
carries own	Contractor												
carries own	Contractor												
carries own	Included in contract	City insured	Included in contract	Included in contract									
Administrative Costs (Personnel expenses)	does not charge administrative costs to service	does not charge administrative costs to service	does not charge administrative costs to service	\$28,684	\$28,116	20 hours/week. Not charged to project	Included in hours for Mid-day. Not charged.	does not charge administrative costs to service	does not charge administrative costs to service				
Other Direct Costs (printing marketing materials, promotions, etc)	\$0	\$0	\$2,273.57	\$8,277	\$8,113	2,804	249	0	0				
Vehicle Service Hours (annual)	1,440	1530	3,024	7,800	\$11,450	2,493	208	1,877	879				
Passengers (annual)	2836	8,243	40,696	104,500	51,600	20,751	434	1,964	6,949				
Performance Indicators													
Cost/Passenger	\$8.29	\$8.14	\$2.45	\$4.40	\$8.72	\$5.76	\$25.03	\$35.73	\$6.73				
Cost/Hour	\$16.33	\$43.87	\$33.00	\$58.97	\$39.30	\$47.94	\$52.22	\$37.38	\$53.22				
Passengers/Hour	2.0	5.4	13.5	13.4	4.5	8.3	2.1	1.0	7.9				

All figures are based on FY 2003/04 unless otherwise noted.

(1) SCOOT reduced program costs from \$910,000 in FY 03-04 to \$700,000 in FY 04-05 without cutting service and while producing a slight increase in ridership. Therefore, the key performance indicator in the above figure, costs per passenger, has been significantly reduced in FY 04-05.

(2) Cost and ridership data for Caltrain shuttle consists only of added morning and weekend trips.

(3) Costs reflect direct operations only. Administrative costs are not funded by this program.

and others who are able to meet specific service goals.

The financial plan sets aside pilot funding for this service. The funding available for this type of service will depend on the cost of maintaining the base service and the level of interest from partner agencies. If needs exceed the funding available, MCTD will either need to choose local partners via a competitive process, or reduce the percentage of subsidy available through the local initiative program. MCTD will develop a process for soliciting projects for the 2007-08 fiscal year, which will likely include a call for projects.

Should a local initiative service prove to meet the standards for a regular transit investment, local services could “graduate” to a standard local service route, eliminating the need for local subsidy.

Additional Improvements to Fixed Route Services

The service plan suggested in this Chapter is financially constrained, based on the current policies of funding agencies and current contract constraints, except as indicated.

Should additional funds be available, the following improvements are recommended to further increase ridership and make the system more usable to all residents of Marin County:

1. **Increase frequencies in the Canal** – The plan provides an important increase in service frequency in the Canal by operating Route 35 every 15-minutes during the peak periods in addition to service on Route 36. Even this improvement will not fully meet demand for service to the Canal that is high all day. Creating an

all-day 15-minute service to the Canal should be a top priority, either by operating Route 35 at 15-minute frequency all day or by operating Route 36 all day to the Canal.

2. **Operate Route 17-Mill Valley service to the Canal** – Much of the current ridership on Route 15 service to Mill Valley comes from Canal and San Rafael riders making an awkward transfer at Strawberry. The service plan simplifies this transfer by making connections at the San Rafael transit center. This will increase ridership from the north and will increase the usefulness of this route to Mill Valley. Ideally, the Route should be extended to serve the Canal directly, eliminating the need to transfer in San Rafael.
3. **30-Minute Service to Mill Valley** – The improvements planned for the Mill Valley to San Rafael corridor through the creation of Route 17 could easily justify 30-minute service very quickly. The current service level, planned to maintain the current Route 15’s hourly headway may be overwhelmed with an increase in ridership, especially as a small bus. Mill Valley will now be connected to both the Marin City and San Rafael Transit Hubs, making one transfer connections to virtually anywhere in the system. Ridership and loading on this route needs to be watched carefully for additional frequency needs.
4. **Increase all-day frequency on Route 22 to 30-minutes** – Route 22 service through the Sir Francis Drake Corridor has been improved to be served every 30-minutes during peak periods and hourly during midday and evening periods. Service every 30-minutes could be justified as soon as resources become available. The route has been improved during peaks, and in its all-day direct connection to Fairfax.
5. **Upgrade Service on Route 29 serving San Rafael, Larkspur and Sir Francis Drake Corridor to 30-minute service.**

The revisions to Route 29 represent a substantial improvement to the current route, providing service to a portion of the Canal, and to Larkspur Landing in addition to its current route on the Sir Francis Drake corridor. Service on this route may need additional capacity to serve demand generated by the improvement.

6. **Upgrade Route 45 serving San Rafael Transit Hub- Civic Center – Northgate-Kaiser to 15-minute service.** This new route will create a very strong corridor connecting major destinations in San Rafael, replacing very circuitous service provided by the 57 and 59 routes today. Many riders will transfer to this route at the hub because it will provide a very fast and relatively frequent connection to Kaiser and Northgate as well as the Civic Center area. As demand increases, this may require an upgrade to 15-minute service. Once demand builds on this route and frequencies can be upgraded, this change should be done in combination with offsetting the headways on Routes 22 and 23 by 15 minutes. This would create a 15-minute corridor on the busy San Anselmo-San Rafael route without adding another increment of service. This “offsetting” cannot be done in isolation, because it is currently too important to make half-hourly meets in San Rafael. Once there is a 15-minute corridor along 4th/Red Hill, it will make sense to change some of the connections to the 15-minute route.
7. **Additional night and weekend service.** – The plan does not increase the amount of night service operating on the local routes, nor does it dramatically increase the amount of weekend service. The need for extended service hours was mentioned in several public meetings. Major expansion of evening and weekend service is not included in the initial service plan because those tend to be very low productivity improvements. However, a standard 15-hour service day is suggested for most routes, which should provide some evening hour extensions for local routes. As ridership increases, and if additional funding is available, all service should be extended until at least 9:30 PM, and additional weekend services should be added.
8. **Additional School Trippers** – While the plan does improve school service dramatically, it is impossible to know where ridership will demand extra service, or where bell time demands will dictate the need for extra trips. MCTD is encouraged to work closely with the school districts to minimize the need for special “off schedule” services designed only to meet school demand. However, growth in these kinds of services is inevitable. Some funding has been set-aside in the plan for local initiative service and school service growth. As additional funds become available, MCTD should ensure that as many schools as possible receive service that meets standards.
9. **Piloting Local Initiative Service and Converting Local Initiative to Local Routes** – The local initiative service envisions a partnership between MCTD and local jurisdictions and other entities. Should additional funds become available, MCTD may initiate tests of local initiative service as pilot projects that could either become local initiative service after a year, or may become local routes if productivity standards can be maintained. Conversely, routes that start out as local initiative service may prove to be popular enough to become local fixed routes over time. Additional funding will be needed to add these services as they develop.
10. **Increased Transbay Service** – The need for additional capacity to relieve crowding on the Golden Gate Bridge routes is less pressing than local needs at present, but could become a higher priority over time.

11. **Job shuttles** – During peak commute times, shuttles from the Canal area and Marin City could travel to employment sites in low density areas that are not within walking distance of fixed route transit. This could facilitate access to more employment opportunities within the County.

Contingency Plan for Reduced Funding

The proposed service plan will undergo intense scrutiny after adoption, with detailed analysis expected by Golden Gate Transit and the other contractors to ensure that schedules can be met and quality service maintained. Although the plan conservatively estimates funding availability and the need for additional running time, it is possible that costs may be higher or revenue lower than projected, resulting in a need to reduce service levels.

Should there be a need to reduce service from planned levels, the potential reductions include the following. None of these service cuts is “recommended” as a priority – implementing any one of them would substantially reduce the service improvements proposed in the plan.

1. **Reduce Route 45 service in North San Rafael to hourly** – This route which is scheduled to provide high quality service to the major trip generators north of the San Rafael Transit center could be operated hourly, consistent with current headways in those corridors.
2. **Remove Route 29 from the Canal** – Operating this route directly up Anderson Drive would potentially save a bus but would eliminate the direct service from the Canal to Marin General Hospital and College of Marin.
3. **Reduce Tiburon service to peak hours** – Midday transit ridership in Tiburon is one of the weaker services in the system. Changing from an all day to peak hour service and/or replacing the entire service with a local initiative shuttle would save resources.
4. **Eliminate new Larkspur-Corte Madera Shuttle** – This route would become strictly a local initiative route.
5. **Eliminate Santa Venetia service** – The plan restores year-round peak period service to the Santa Venetia neighborhood. Routes serving this neighborhood have not been productive in the past and should be carefully monitored.

Coverage Deleted by the Proposed Service Plan

Most of the improvements provided in the proposed service plan are the result of restructuring current routes and services. While the goal was to retain service to all areas that currently have service, these service improvements cannot be made without eliminating the least productive services in the system.

The following is a list of current coverage that will be eliminated or significantly reduced as a result of this plan.

North of the San Rafael Transit Center

1. **Direct service to Fireman’s Fund** – Currently, Fireman’s Fund is served by several routes, both the 53 and 55 local routes and the 57/59 long line service that is being extensively restructured. While Fireman’s Fund is among the largest employers in Marin County, it has never generated significant transit ridership. There are less than 15 riders all day on all routes combined at this location. Most Fireman’s Fund employees that use tran-

sit generally board Golden Gate Transit’s Routes 70 and 80 at the nearby Atherton bus pads and are expected to continue to do so. By deleting service to Fireman’s Fund, the local Novato route serving Novato’s residential neighborhoods can provide better service to Novato’s growing downtown and to Vintage Oaks. This trade-off will be more useful to more riders.

Fireman’s Fund may want to consider a partnership with MCTD, developing a local initiative shuttle route that will connect with services at Ignacio and/or downtown Novato.

The proposed plan offers another advantage in Novato – because the local neighborhood service becomes the primary service to Vintage Oaks, weekend service will be added to the Novato local route. This is a major enhancement for the San Marin, Ignacio and Redwood Boulevard corridors.

2. **Bel Marin Keys service** – The service plan eliminates service traveling into the Bel Marin Keys neighborhood, concentrating service on the arterial streets. Virtually all ridership in Bel Marin Keys was recorded at the last stop at Galli and Digital. About 35 riders per day board or alight there. Analyzing the surveys of passengers recorded at that spot, it appears that many of the riders are actually middle school students who take the southbound route to the end, get off and then reboard, where they were counted again. Improved school service will elimi-

nate the need to do this out of direction travel. Virtually no passengers boarded or alighted inside Bel Marin Keys during commute hours, reinforcing the information from surveys.

3. **Miller Creek Road in Marinwood** – The Miller Creek Road segment of the 57/59 will be eliminated as part of this plan. Less than five riders per day board or alight at these stops. These riders will be able to walk from the proposed Route 49, at the 101 pad stop, or south to the new Route 347 on Lucas Valley Road.
4. **Los Ranchitos Road in San Rafael** – This segment of the circuitous 57/59 is also proposed for elimination. Though there is a significant stop activity on this short segment (combined about 100 boardings and alightings per day) all of the riders that board and alight on this segment will be walking distance from more frequent service on the proposed routes 47 and 45 at the Northgate Mall.

South of the San Rafael Transit Center

5. **Peacock Gap Service** – Service to Peacock Gap out Pt. San Pedro Road had been provided by peak hour service on Golden Gate Transit’s Route 32 supplemented with school service on Route 132. Route 132 has recently been cancelled, as it was by far the poorest performing school route in the system, carrying no more than three students per day. Golden Gate’s Route carried less

Figure 3-5 Existing (2005) Rural Transit Service in Marin County

Route	Days of Week	Roundtrips per Day	Typical Span	Months
West Marin Stage – North Route	Mon–Fri	4	7:30am– 7:30pm	All year
West Marin Stage – South Route	Mon–Fri	4	6:00am–8:00pm	All year
63 – Stinson Beach	Sat/ Sun	5	8:30am–7:00pm	Mar 15 – Nov 15

than five boardings per trip, and with a productivity of 7 passengers per hour it is not reasonable as a regular fixed route. Virtually all of the ridership on the existing routes comes from the very far end of the route in Peacock Gap, with virtually no riders the entire length of Pt. San Pedro. Community service to Peacock Gap could be a candidate for a local initiative service.

6. **Shoreline Highway to Muir Beach** – If the routing of the South Route of the West Marin Stagecoach is rerouted to follow Panoramic rather than Shoreline highway (see discussion in subsequent section in this chapter, Rural Service Plan), service along Shoreline highway would be abandoned. At present, this area has very low ridership. If this service were abandoned, the MCTD could explore other alternatives with residents (such as assisting with vanpools) for the very few people who currently use the service.

Rural Service Plan

Transit service in west Marin has been growing. The 63-Stinson Beach has long provided recreational transit service on weekends (currently operated March 15 through November 15). Starting in 2002, Route 63 was complemented by weekday service provided by the West Marin Stagecoach following a grass roots effort by the communities of western Marin to create transit service geared to the rural communities in West Marin. This service provides year-round weekday transit service on a northern and southern route. Combined, the North and South routes currently carry approximately 21,500 passengers per year.

Proposed Rural Transit Service Plan

Rural transit service in Marin has three primary goals:

- Provide mobility for residents of western Marin.
- Provide transit service to key destinations (primarily Stinson Beach, Pt. Reyes Station, and Samuel P. Taylor State Park).
- Match each route with appropriately sized vehicles.

Apart from increasing mobility and access to this area, transit service in west Marin benefits employees of these areas, visitors, as well as county residents by reducing traffic congestion on local roads. Students are a particularly important group of riders for the Stage, as they form about 44% of its ridership and are highly transit dependent.

Rural transit service should not be held to the same productivity standards as school and urban fixed route service. Because it operates smaller vehicles over long distances through sparsely populated areas, it can never approach the productivity of transit service in areas with greater residential and employment density.

Planned vehicle sizes take into account the anticipated ridership growth caused by proposed changes. Summary of proposed changes to the rural service plan:

- **Extend West Marin Stagecoach** – Extend the North Route of the Stagecoach service to San Rafael to improve connections with local and regional transit service.
- **Add Saturday service to North Route.**
- **Improve service for students.** On the North Route of the West Marin Stage,

the schedule will be adjusted to better meet the needs of students and provide enhanced connections to the 101 corridor. On the South Route, an additional mid-afternoon trip will be added to serve students returning from school. Better serving students is crucial because they are the primary users of stage service.

- **Combine the 63-Stinson Beach with the West Marin Stagecoach South Route.** By combining the 63-Stinson Beach and the South West Marin Stage, the South West Marin Stage can offer weekend service to Stage residents and provide the weekend recreational service year round.
- **Use larger vehicles on West Marin Stage.** Operate larger vehicles (up to 22 passenger instead of 13 passenger capacity) for the West Marin Stage to reduce pass ups. Vehicles will either be acquired by MCTD or provided by a contractor.
- **Introduce consistent fare structure.** This plan proposes to make the fare structure on all rural transit service consistent with the rest of MCTD’s service. For the Stagecoach to be consistent with the rest of the MCTD local system, fares should be raised to \$2.00 per trip, with discounts for youth, disabled, and senior riders.
- **Introduce pilot coastal service.** The communities of Western Marin have requested service for trips along the coast to complement the core service linking Western Marin to the more urban east. The schedule of the South Route has been adjusted to provide, as a trial pilot service, a coastal route. The productivity of this route can be evaluated during this initial trial to see if this merits becoming a permanent extension.

West Marin Stage – North Route

This service plan proposes to significantly improve the North Route of the West Marin

Stage by extending its route to San Rafael and adjusting the schedule to better serve students traveling from west Marin to schools in central Marin County.

The current North Route of the West Marin Stagecoach terminates at San Anselmo. Extending the route to San Rafael Transit Center will increase the opportunities for connections to local and regional destinations, and will eliminate transfers for some riders who now must transfer at San Anselmo to reach San Rafael. To reduce the likelihood of pass ups on the “Miracle Mile”, MCTD may consider operating non-stop Westbound from San Rafael to San Anselmo, and “alightings only” eastward from San Anselmo to San Rafael.

MCTD is also proposing to adjust the schedule to improve service for school trips (see Figure 3-6). The adjusted schedule was also designed so that riders could confidently make timed connections to transit service on the Highway 101 corridor, improving connectivity to other destinations in Marin and throughout the region.

Year round Saturday service will be offered on this route to allow urban-rural connections on the weekend. The same schedule would be operated on weekends.

The proposed schedule for the North Route is fairly tight – for each three-hour roundtrip (15 minutes of driving time), there are 24 minutes of layover, 12 in Inverness and 12 in San Rafael, with a 57-minute lunch break in the middle of the day. Short layovers on a route of this length are not ideal because a bus that gets off schedule may not have enough time to recover, throwing the schedule off on later runs.

Figure 3-6 Proposed weekday schedule for the North and South Routes of the West Marin Stage

North Route		
	Leave San Rafael TC	Arrive Inverness
Westbound	8:22am	9:38am
	11:22am	12:38pm
	3:07pm	4:23pm
	6:07pm	7:23pm
	Leave Inverness	Arrive San Rafael TC
Eastbound	6:50am	8:10am
	9:50am	11:10am
	1:35pm	2:55pm
	4:35pm	5:55pm
South Route		
	Leave Marin City	Arrive Bolinas
Westbound	8:10am	9:13am
	10:36am	11:39am
	3:20pm	4:23pm
	5:46pm	6:49pm
	Leave Bolinas	Arrive Marin City
Eastbound	6:57am	8:00am
	9:23am	10:26am
	2:07pm	3:10pm
	4:33pm	5:36pm

To allow more recovery time, MCTD may consider not allowing boardings between San Anselmo and San Rafael as a way to reduce travel times on this segment. Limited stops may improve schedule adherence, but would reduce the utility of the extension to San Rafael for West Marin Stage riders who would want to board from somewhere between the San Rafael Transit Center and San Anselmo.

West Marin Stage – South Route

By combining the 63-Stinson Beach with the South West Marin Stage, the South West Marin Stage can be offered year-round on weekends. The combined route will continue to offer the same recreational service as the 63-Stinson Beach and improve its recreational purpose by providing year-round (rather than seasonal) recreational service seven days a week not just to Stinson Beach but also to Bolinas and Audubon Canyon, when it is open.

There is an important decision to be made about the routing of this consolidated route that will require further collaboration between MCTD and the community. It can access Stinson either via Panoramic Highway (routing of the current Line 63) or use Shoreline Highway, the routing of the Stage. Travel times for each routing are about the same, so it is not an operational consideration. The Shoreline routing is desirable because it would preserve the current routing of the Stage, but the routing along Panoramic would serve a larger existing ridership (on weekend Route 63 service) and would have more potential weekday ridership because of higher housing density along Panoramic. If the Panoramic routing were adopted, the MCTD could explore other alternatives (such as assisting with vanpools) for the very small amount of boarding activity from Muir Beach area residents.

To better serve students that use this route, MCTD is proposing to also adjust the schedule of the South Route. Students form a majority of ridership in the afternoon, but the current schedule works best for students that participate in after school activities. By changing the

schedule, the Stage can serve students that do not participate in after school activities, improving service for a significant number of riders and bolstering capacity to further reduce the likelihood of pass ups.

Coastal Extension to South Route

In response to community interest in Stage service that operates between Pt. Reyes Station and Stinson Beach, the MCTD is proposing to alter the schedule of the South Route to offer this coastal service as a pilot service on a trial basis, with only a marginal increase to annual service hours. This service would allow the MCTD and community to attempt to prove the demand of coastal service with minimal impact to the South Route service. The coastal service can later be evaluated against productivity standards before, if merited, investing in a new vehicle and/or reallocating available service hours from the core Stage service.

Though MCTD and the community must continue to work together to define this route, the MCTD is planning to operate it on Wednesdays and Fridays, taking advantage of changes to the afternoon bell times of Tam High School. Working around the high school's bell times to not dilute the route's usefulness for its core constituency – students. Though the amount of service provided on the coast will be minimal, it is expected to provide basic mobility as well as to match expected demand.

West Marin Stage – Vehicle Capacity

Currently, the West Marin Stage service uses 13-passenger vehicles. There are already pass-ups noted on the rural system, particularly when

school begins, or when there is a new semester. With a service that operates only 4 trips per day, and with the long trip lengths required, it is imperative that there be adequate capacity on every trip to handle all passengers waiting at every stop.

To better meet current demand as well as the ridership growth anticipated from service improvements, MCTD will acquire 22-passenger vehicles to replace the current 13-passenger vehicles as soon as possible. Some federal funding can be applied to the cost of these vehicles, but acquiring them will require approximately 12 months. In the meantime, MCTD can continue to operate its current vehicles or the contract operator may be able to provide larger vehicles.

Introduce Consistent Fare Structure

The fare structure on all rural transit service should be consistent with the rest of MCTD's service. By making urban, rural, and school service as similar as possible, transit service in Marin will be more easily understood, especially by the new or occasional rider. Charging \$2.00 per ride (and offering the same discounts for youth, disabled, and senior riders) on the West Marin Stage will also help the MCTD recover more of the cost of operating these low productivity services.

Figure 3-7 MCTD Existing Rural Transit Service



Figure 3-8 MCTD Proposed Rural Transit Service

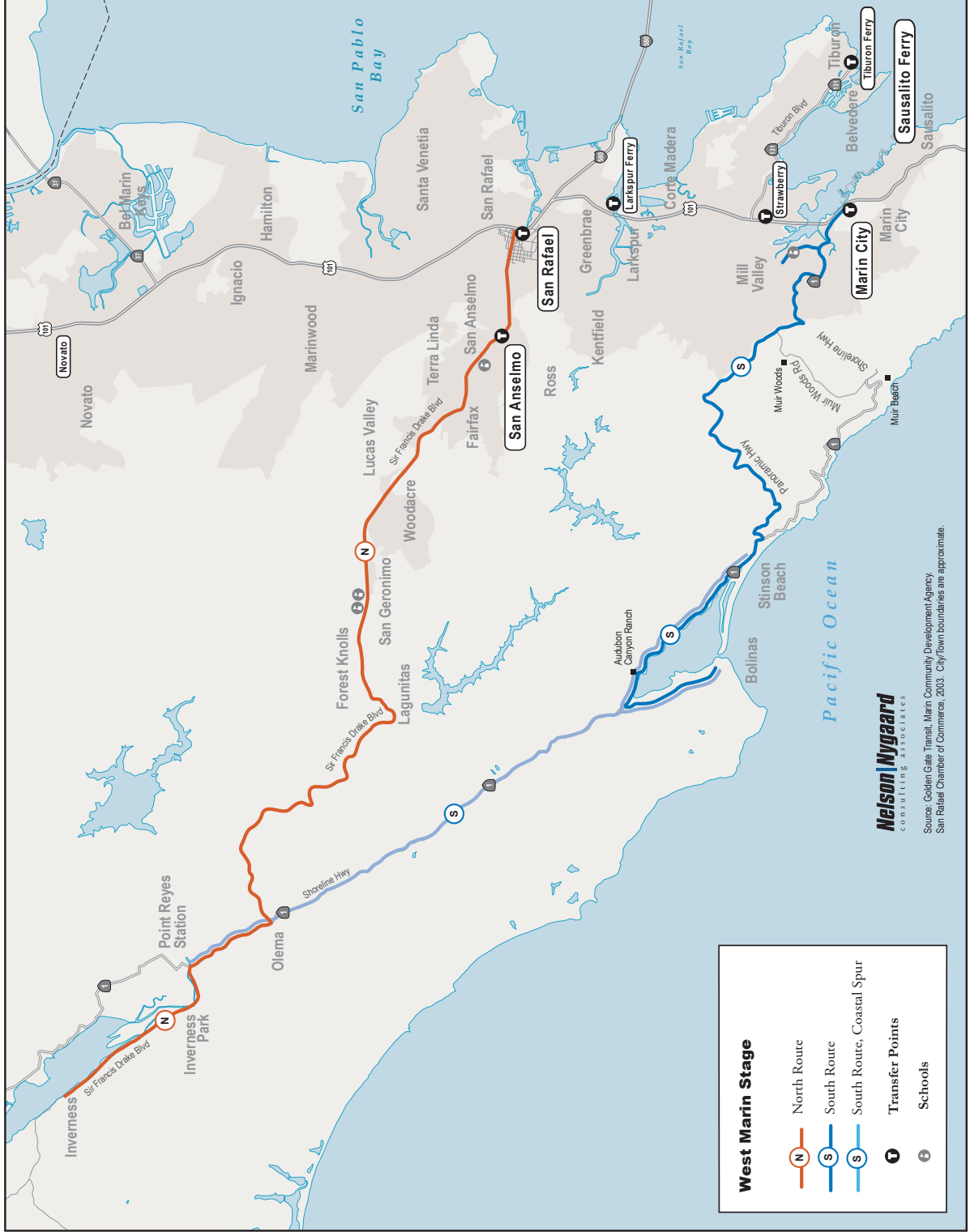


Figure 3-9 Planned Implementation Schedule for Proposed Rural Service Improvements

Improvement	Planned Implementation Start Date
New fare structure on the West Marin Stagecoach routes	ASAP
Combine 63-Stinson Beach with South Route of West Marin Stage to provide weekend service	Summer 2006
Acquire larger vehicles for Stage	12 months after funding is secured
Extend the North Route of the West Marin Stage to San Rafael and change schedule.	Fall 2006
Provide Saturday service (after seasonal Saturday and Sunday service) on the South Route of the West Marin Stage	Fall 2006

Phasing of Improvements

If this service plan is approved, the MCTD plans to use the implementation schedule shown in Figure 3-9 for proposed improvements.

Possible Additional Improvements

Additional improvements have been considered, but are not possible with expected funding. If more funding for rural service were to become available, possible service improvements are described below.

- **West Marin Stage – North Route**
 - Add additional weekend service – If demand merits, add additional weekend trips, either on Saturday or as new Sunday service.
 - Serve the Pt. Reyes Visitor Center on weekends. Serving Pt. Reyes should increase the productivity of this route by increasing its utility for employees, volunteers, and visitors of Pt. Reyes, just as the South Route provides access to Stinson Beach. This deviation will add to travel times. The weekend schedule could be adjusted slightly to accommodate for this addition and still make meets with GGT. This possible improvement needs more thorough analysis.

- **West Marin Stage – South Route**
 - Add additional weekend service. Adding a second bus to this route to accommodate additional weekend demand from March 15 to November 15.

Performance of the Proposed Route Structure

The goal of this service plan and the Measure A sales tax expenditure plan is to create a “seamless local bus transit system that improves mobility and serves community needs.”

This section evaluates the expected performance of the proposed service plan against the performance measures first presented in Chapter 2 and, where possible, compares projected to current performance. Expected performance may take up to three years to reach maturity as a major service revision requires time to implement and mature.

Specific Performance Measures

Three years after implementation the proposed service plan is expected to reach maturity. By this time ridership in the urban area is projected

to exceed current system ridership by 21%, growing from 2.9 million riders per year to 3.6 million. This growth implies a 12% increase in productivity from 26 to 29 passengers per hour for the urban system.

Several factors contribute to these ridership estimates. These include: natural expected growth in ridership of 2% a year, a small increase in the number of service hours provided, changes in frequency and span, increases in weekend service, improved usefulness and connectivity of some of the proposed routing, and the reallocation of some service hours to more productive uses. Where changes were made, ridership estimates were validated against existing MCTD routes in areas that are comparable in terms of service frequency, housing density, and employment density.

In addition to ridership, another measure of the overall performance of a transit system is its productivity – how many passengers it carries for each hour of operation. If ridership is a measure of overall success – whether or not a transit system is attracting more riders – productivity is a measure of how cost-effectively it is transporting its riders. Improvements to each type of service, whether urban, rural, or school-oriented service, are expected to boost their respective productivities. For example, as proposed the urban system is expected to increase productivity by 12%, in part by improving frequency on some routes, but more importantly because of improvements in the directness and usefulness of the routing.

Productivity goals stand in tension with goals for geographical coverage. MCTD could maximize its productivity by only serving those

portions of Marin County that have relatively dense housing and employment opportunities, but this would limit the system's effectiveness in providing mobility to a wide range of people and places in the County. Besides productivity, the specific measures for Measure A sales tax expenditure plan include measures of geographical coverage. Under the proposed service plan, most of the coverage indicators are unchanged except for the percentage of middle and high schools service by transit that increases from 77% to over 85% with the creation of new school routes.

**Figure 3-10 Ridership Estimates (By Route) For Proposed System
After Three Years Of Operation**

Number	Route Name	Expected Annual Ridership	Expected Productivity
Urban System			
17	MC - MV - SR	260,000	22
19	MC - Tiburon	82,000	20
22	SRTC - San Anselmo - MC - Sausalito	600,000	24
23	Fairfax - San Anselmo - SR	280,000	21
29	SRTC - LL - CofM - SA	245,000	31
35	Canal/ SRTC daily	880,000	74
36	SRTC - MC trips	360,000	40
45	Kaiser/Northgate - SRTC	250,000	27
49	Ignacio - Hamilton - Grand - SRTC	235,000	20
51	Novato local	170,000	20
52	Novato Blvd (Novato - Ignacio)	130,000	21
101	Novato - SRTC - MC (Current 71)	140,000	40
221	Larkspur Community Route	31,000	20
233	Santa Venetia (all year peak period)	27,000	21
347	County Connection HHS	25,000	9
	Total	3,690,000	29
School Day Service			
107	Sausalito/ St Hilary's	15,000	23
113	Corte Madera/ RHS	8,700	32
115	Tiburon/ RHS	22,000	39
117	Corte Madera/ NCS/ Hall	23,000	30
123	San Anselmo/ WHS	100,000	43
125	Lagunitas/ Drake HS	15,000	33
126	San Anselmo/ Brookside	38,000	73
127	Sleepy Hollow/ WHS	40,000	42
139	Lucas Valley/ TLHS	7,800	24
143	Sausalito/ THS	19,000	31
153	San Marin/ Novato	15,000	69
155	Novato\ Ignacio	20,000	44
	Total	323,500	40
Rural System			
61	South West Marin Stagecoach	20,000	4
68	North West Marin Stagecoach	22,000	4
	Total	64,500	6

Figure 3-11 Summary of Current and Proposed Performance

Measure A Goal	Objective	Three Year Performance Goal	Current System Performance	Proposed System Performance
Fills a gap in the bus transit network.	A. Provide service within ¼ mile of major employers (over 100 employees), schools, colleges, hospitals and other major trip generators in Marin County.	90% of middle and high schools meet standard.	77% of middle and high schools	86% of middle and high schools.
		80% of major employers and other trip generators meet standard. New routes do not duplicate existing services but "fill a gap" in the network.	71% of all generators (not including schools)	71% of all generators (not including schools)
Provides seamless connections to regional service.	B. Provide service that provides seamless connections between local and regional service.	95% of all timed connections completed as scheduled.	TBD	Connecting improved at all transfer points
		C. Maximize on-time performance of local transit services.	56% (weekday all-day routes) TBD	On-time performance improved On-time performance improved
Meets productivity standards based on passengers per hours.	D. Operate the system in a manner that will maximize system productivity.	95% of all paratransit trips arrive within pick-up window.	88.6% of all paratransit trips arrive within pick-up window	TBD
		20 passengers per hour minimum for all fixed routes after 1 year of operation.	6 out of 13 routes meet goal (22, 23, 35, 36, 59, 71)	13 of 13 routes
Meets cost effectiveness standards based on subsidy per trip.	E. Operate the system in a manner that will minimize the need for subsidy.	7 passengers per hour for all local initiative services.	N/A	Route 347 meets goal
		20 passengers per trip for all special school trips.	71% of school trips meet goal	100% of school trips meets goal
Relieves congestion as measured in total ridership.	F. Operate the system in a manner that will have the greatest impact on congestion.	4 passengers per hour for rural service.	All rural service meets goal	All rural service meets goal
		2 passengers per hour minimum for paratransit service.	2.14 passengers/hour	No change
Eliminates pass-ups or overcrowding on existing routes.	G. Operate the system in a manner that will maximize mobility for the County's most vulnerable citizens.	\$5.00 maximum system average fixed route subsidy.	Meets goal (\$4.10)	Meets goal
		Fares to increase at the rate of inflation.	N/A	Meets goal
Promotes environmental justice based on demographics analysis.		Total ridership increasing at least at the rate of population growth in Marin County.	Exceeds goal: Marin population growth (mid-2000 to mid-2003): -0.5% MCTD Ridership growth (mid-2000 to mid-2003): 4%	Exceeds goal: Ridership growth expected to average 4% a year for next 5 years
		School ridership increasing at greater the rate of student population growth in Marin County.	Meets goal	Meets goal
		No consistent pass-ups on regular local fixed routes.	Estimated 0 pass ups per year on regular fixed-route service	Meets goal
		No consistent pass-ups on San Francisco Express Routes	Need data	Meets goal
		Maintain a balance between routes designed for ridership and routes designed for coverage.	50% rev hours are ridership based. 50% are coverage based	50% rev hours are ridership based. 50% are coverage based
		85% of all residents in Marin County within ¼ mile of a transit route.	94% of Marin residents	> 90% of Marin residents
		85% of all census block groups exceeding the County median of senior population served by transit (within ¼ mile).	94% of senior block groups	> 90% of senior block groups
		85% of all census block groups exceeding the County median of disabled persons served by transit (within ¼ mile)	94% of disabled block groups	> 85% of disabled block groups
		90% of all census block groups exceeding the County median of zero car households served by transit (within ¼ mile).	97% of zero car household block groups	> 95% of zero-car household block groups
		90% of all census block groups below the County median income level served by transit (within ¼ mile).	93% of block groups by income	> 90% of block groups by income
		Meets or exceeds Title IV compliance requirements	Meets goal	Meets goal

Measure A Goal	Objective	Three Year Performance Goal	Current System Performance	Proposed System Performance
	H. Operate the system in manner that encourages public involvement and participation.	All Board meetings noticed in English and Spanish All rider critical public information available in English and Spanish All meetings to be held in accessible locations that are served by transit (within 1/4 mile). Continued work with Citizens Advisory Committee. Establish School Services Advisory Committee to coordinate bell times and services.	Meets goal Meets goal Meets goal	Meets goal Meets goal Meets goal
	I. Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with services performed by the agency.	75% of respondents rate the services "good" or "excellent" in surveys taken at least every five years.	55%	TBD
	J. Develop a capital plan strategy which 1) seeks to minimize air quality issues and 2) seeks to maximize transit ridership by providing quality amenities and vehicles.	Plan developed.	N/A	Meets goal
Attracts outside funding sources including federal state and toll revenue.	K. Maximize outside funding.	Outside grants increase at greater than CPI.	N/A	Meets goal

CHAPTER 4 PARATRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

Paratransit Planning Principles

The paratransit service plan is based on four service principles. These principles were developed from the analysis of existing conditions and an understanding of the future demographics in the County.

- MCTD must continue to meet the mandate and spirit of the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Paratransit service should be available to all residents of the County who meet ADA eligibility guidelines, regardless of where they live with a high likelihood that all requests for rides can be met.
- Demand for traditional paratransit services can only be controlled by broadening the number of choices available to paratransit riders, and by keeping people on fixed route transit as long as possible.
- All services must be sustainable

Mandated and Non Mandated Paratransit Service

Throughout this document, two types of paratransit service are described – mandated services, which are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and non mandated services which go beyond the requirements of the ADA. Paratransit services in general include a wide range of service delivery mechanisms that provide door-to-door service for riders who are frail or who have disabilities that keep them from using the fixed route transit system. In Marin County, the majority of paratransit service is provided by Whistlestop Wheels,

although there are a range of social service and other agencies that provide paratransit service to particular user groups.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is Civil Rights legislation that guarantees access to a well-defined level of service for individuals who are unable to use standard fixed route service, due to their disability. The services required by ADA are based on the amount and location of fixed route services offered. In general, paratransit service is required in an area $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side of a fixed route, and must be offered during the days and times when fixed route service is provided. In geographic areas where no fixed routes operate, or during times of day or days of the week when fixed route service is not operating, there is no requirement that paratransit service be offered.

Fares are another criteria covered by the ADA. Under ADA, passengers can be charged up to twice the fixed route cash fare for paratransit service. In Marin County, a paratransit rider could be charged up to \$4.00 per one-way trip for mandated service. Other criteria covered by ADA include a requirement that trips not be prioritized by the type of trip being made (ie. Medical trips can not be prioritized over recreational trips), and the need to provide adequate capacity to meet demand.

Marin County has a history of providing paratransit service that exceeds the requirements of ADA in a number of important ways. Fares are well below the levels allowed by ADA. At least some service is provided throughout the County, even in areas that are outside of the mandated service area. As has been noted,

however, service outside of the mandated area is constrained, with frequent service denials. A key challenge of this plan is maintaining service mandated by the ADA, as demands on this service continue to increase, while still providing at least a safety net of services to those outside of the ADA service area.

Continuing to provide quality service to all paratransit consumers is a major challenge because subsidies for paratransit trips are so high. Each trip on the door-to-door system is subsidized by more than \$30.00, and the demand for service grows each year as the population continues to age.

This plan builds on the existing Whistlestop Wheels paratransit service, adding new service delivery mechanisms to maintain people on fixed route as long as possible and to provide new ways to reach service demand throughout the County.

Maintaining Mandated ADA Paratransit Services

MCTD and Whistlestop Wheels have done an excellent job of meeting and exceeding the mandate for paratransit services under the American's With Disabilities Act. The service has continued to get more productive over time as Whistlestop has improved their scheduling and dispatch capability and begun to reduce no-shows and late cancellations.

Maintaining cost effective ADA service requires that regular transit be as accessible as possible, including allowing for "senior and disabled friendly" services and travel training that will encourage older adults to develop the habits of using fixed route transit as long as possible.

The Marketing Plan, presented in Chapter 5 of this report, presents a number of alternatives for

maintaining senior and disabled riders on fixed route transit. These techniques include travel training for older adults, free midday transit to ADA eligible riders, and the use of small bus and local initiative service to penetrate the community with local shuttles that can reduce walk distances and encourage transit use. These techniques must be aggressively pursued simultaneously to ensure that future ADA eligible riders learn how to use the transit system and gain confidence before they are physically or cognitively unable to use the system.

Even with all of the techniques described throughout this plan, ADA mandated paratransit ridership is expected to grow by 5% per year. Additional techniques are required to meet demand within the anticipated resources. These techniques are described below. No increase in general paratransit hours is recommended until other alternatives have been attempted.

Bus Travel Training

Although the eligibility standards for ADA paratransit require that the consumer be unable to use fixed route transit, in reality, most consumers can ride accessible fixed route transit some of the time and under some conditions. A travel training program that identifies the most likely bus riders and makes it as seamless as possible for them to use fixed route transit for all or some of their trips is both economical for the agency and provides higher levels of mobility for users.

King County (Seattle) Washington has one of the best bus travel training programs in the Country. Training is focused on people who are most likely to take advantage of the bus system, including people aged 17-21 with Individualized Education Programs who can be trained to use the bus to school, work and training;

seniors living in congregate housing; and social programs where people congregate, including senior centers.

Training should be offered to all applicants who make trips in areas that have access to transit service. One of the key questions in travel training is how to know whether someone will be traveling to places that have transit service that will meet their needs. In King County, the application for paratransit service includes a section where the applicant identifies where they live and common places where they travel. This helps to identify individuals who use corridors with good service.

Travel training has a number of different components that all need to be considered:

- **Lift Training** for wheelchair users and users of other mobility devices, especially new lift users. Lift users are often intimidated by learning “on the street”. A group class brought to consumers would allow potential riders to learn the lift and learn the bus tie down systems in advance of taking a ride on the street. Given comments received in outreach meetings about difficulties with the tie-down systems on Golden Gate Transit, this type of training would be especially helpful.
- **System Training** which includes both a “classroom” training on how to use the bus system and an escorted bus trip on the system. These types of trainings are often given at senior housing and senior center facilities.
- **Individual Training** which teaches a consumer how to use an individual line or how to make an individual trip. This type of training is especially effective for persons with disabilities traveling to work or school, or making other repeat trips.

As a reward for training, the rider is generally offered free ride coupons for a period of time, to encourage them to try on their own. Follow-up

surveys are done at 6 months and 1 year after training to see if the rider is still using fixed route service.

Travel training costs are easily offset over time by the number of fixed route transit rides taken by individuals who would otherwise ride paratransit. Training should be offered to applicants for paratransit service, whether they are found to be eligible or not, based on their ability and the availability of transit service to their most common destinations. King County has found that the best market for travel training includes senior centers, independent living centers, and senior housing sites, where there is a ready made community that can provide encouragement and information. In addition, developmentally disabled young adults, identified through the Regional Center and Office of Education are another key market for travel training. Although parents of disabled children are often concerned about having their children ride transit to school, travel training a young adult is an important life skill, and parents are often happy to participate with an older teenager. Visually impaired riders can also be trained to navigate the system using specially trained teachers.

In King County, training is contracted to an experienced provider of travel training services. The contract cost for approximately 300 individual and group trainings was \$315,000 in 2004-05; however the increased number of trips made on fixed route at lower subsidy resulted in a net savings from training of about \$200,000. A similar contract in Marin County could be developed and implemented in time for the 2007-08 fiscal year, assuming staff availability.

Currently, MCTD provides one active travel training program. The Route 149 service provides a weekly bus to students at Indian Valley College and the Office of Education who need to learn bus riding skills as part of their life skills program. The route, which will end service in May, is currently operated as a fixed route service, although it does not carry the general public and would not qualify for fixed route funding. MCTD is working with the office of Education to identify alternative methods for providing travel training services to this target group.

Making Better Use of Community Resources

There are currently a number of resources in Marin County that do not provide standard mandated ADA transportation but that could be utilized for that purpose. A primary example is Novato's EZ Rider service, which provides on-demand paratransit within the City of Novato. To the extent possible, Whistlestop should be using EZ Rider as an "overflow" service for ADA mandated trips – scheduling as many trips as possible on EZ Rider to help meet service requirements there. Services like EZ Rider are especially useful for serving a combination of mandated and non-mandated demand. EZ Rider operates on Sundays, when there is little mandated service provided in Novato.

Currently EZ Rider's productivity is lower than the general Whistlestop service. It is imperative that Whistlestop Wheels work with EZ Rider and the Novato Human Needs Center in Novato to ensure that all three systems are coordinated and work effectively. If EZ Rider productivity cannot be increased in the next 12-months, it should be replaced with a shuttle service that is coordinated out of the senior center in Novato.

Other similar resources exist throughout the County, provided by social service agencies and others. Before denying any trip, Whistlestop should make referral to these additional services. In cases like EZ Rider, where Whistlestop is the contractor providing the service, scheduling should be automatic.

Adding a Taxi Component

Many paratransit operators utilize taxi companies for all or part of their paratransit service. In general, taxis are more flexible, allowing the rider to call on-demand for rides around the clock, and somewhat less expensive than door-to-door van and sedan services, because taxi operators are limited to pre-set metered rates. Taxi operations also offer the option of setting subsidy levels for non-ADA mandated trips at an amount that meets the financial constraints of the agency.

While taxi services may have a role in providing some paratransit trips in Marin County, they are not a reasonable choice for the full range of paratransit services. Whistlestop Wheels, provides a much higher degree of personalized service and door-to-door assistance, not generally provided by taxi companies. Taxi operators in Marin do not have accessible vehicles needed for this service, nor do they have the capacity required to serve the high demand for paratransit at peak times. In addition, issues such as insurance provision, sensitivity training and drug testing for drivers, and other barriers limit the ability to substitute taxi service for traditional paratransit.

Taxi service may be appropriate as a supplement to traditional ADA services, especially in the non-mandated areas where the traditional services are unable to meet demand, and where additional paratransit capacity would be very costly. As part of the Short Range Transit Plan an initial study of taxi options was completed. Additional implementation work will be done by MCTD as part of an MTC funded study, expected to be completed in 2006. Implementation would likely take place in the 2007-08 fiscal year.

Taxi Operations in Marin County

Currently, there are four primary taxi companies (some operating under more than one flag) that serve Marin County with 69 vehicles. Forty of the 69 vehicles are held by a single company as summarized in Figure 4-1.

As part of a broader analysis of the opportunities to use taxi service as part of the local transit system, MCTD met with taxi companies in August 2005. A number of potential opportunities to integrate subsidized taxi service into the transit and paratransit system were discussed. Additional work with both taxi operators and other stakeholders will be completed as part of the MTC study.

Currently, there is no taxi component in the paratransit program, primarily because there are no accessible vehicles in the system. However, the vast majority of trips provided by Whistle-stop do not require lift access, and could be fulfilled by taxis. Other concerns about taxi service include drivers not being trained to work with this frail population, and the need for drug screening and other contracting requirements.

Figure 4-1 Marin County Taxi Inventory

Taxi Company				Options for Payment			Fare Charged	
Company Name	# Vehicles Licensed	# Accessible Vehicles	Parts of County NOT Served	3rd Party Billing	Swipe Card	Voucher	Flag Drop	Per Mile
Tiburon Taxi	1	0	Novato, Northern Marin	No	Credit Card	Yes	\$2.30	\$2.50
Novato Taxi	7	0	South of San Rafael	Yes	Credit Card	Yes	\$3.00	\$3.00
North Bay Taxi Cooperative	19	0	Serves whole county	Yes	Credit Card	Yes	\$1.90	\$3.00
Radio Cabs on the Move	40	0	West Marin	Yes	Credit Card	Yes (Scrip)	\$2.20	\$2.50
Happy Cab	5	0	Serves whole county	Yes	Credit Card	Yes	\$1.90	\$2.00

There are essentially two approaches to using taxis as part of the paratransit system:

- **Contractor Choice** – Under this approach, Whistlestop Wheels would have the option of calling a taxi to serve any paratransit trip. Consumers would continue to call Whistlestop and would have no choice of the type of vehicle that serves their trip. Since there are currently no accessible taxis, Whistlestop would call the taxi companies only when there was an ambulatory rider making a trip, and only when the cost and circumstances of the trip made it advantageous to call a cab. An ideal example of a trip that would be moved to taxi service is a medical return trip for a client that missed a scheduled trip who would otherwise have to wait a long time for another Whistlestop van. The consumer would pay the taxi the same fare that would normally be paid for the Whistlestop trip, and the taxi company would bill Whistlestop for the remainder of the trip. Because Whistlestop is in control of which trips are fulfilled by taxi, the issue of accessible vehicles is not a problem. Whistlestop would simply not refer any wheelchair trips to the taxi companies.

The major advantage to Whistlestop in utilizing taxis would be flexibility in scheduling and dispatching. By allowing Whistlestop to choose which trips will be assigned to taxi, Whistlestop can ensure that only the most cost effective trips are being taken on taxi.

Consumers generally do not prefer this approach because they have no control over who will fill their trip request. Some riders will prefer taxi service; others will prefer Whistlestop.

To implement this type of taxi program, Whistlestop would need to develop a third party billing arrangement with the taxi companies. Whistlestop would retain the right to use any or all of the

taxi companies with whom they have a third party billing arrangement. Any taxi operator that fails to provide the highest quality service will simply not receive calls for rides. Taxi companies that agree to participate in the program will require their drivers to take sensitivity training, provided at no cost to the drivers or the taxi companies, and will bill Whistlestop directly for the full cost of all trips authorized by Whistlestop. The fare paid by the passenger will go directly to the driver as a gratuity and incentive for providing good service. Three of the four taxi companies in Marin County currently have the ability to accept 3rd party billing, and all four can accept a voucher for service.

Under the “contractor’s choice” alternative, a total of 250 taxi trips are expected to be generated each month, for a total of 3,000 trips per year. At an average cost of \$15 per trip, the cost of this program is expected to be \$45,000. Most of these trips will essentially be new trips, because Whistlestop would utilize taxis in order to be able to fulfill trips that would otherwise be denied, so this is a net cost to the paratransit program.

- **Consumer Choice** – Under the consumer choice model, consumers would have the option for calling a taxi or calling Whistlestop for their trips. Because Whistlestop Wheels will continue to be the provider of mandated services under the American’s With Disabilities Act, MCTD would have more flexibility in developing a taxi scrip program and would have more control over the amount spent on taxi service.

Under a consumer choice program, MCTD would set the rate of subsidy for taxi service. Other systems, like King County in Seattle, Washington, have generally chosen a 50% subsidy for taxi scrip. A consumer would purchase a book of \$20 worth of scrip for \$10.

The scrip would be used as the payment mechanism for the taxi ride which would be charged at the regular metered rate. Generally, transit operators limit the number of scrip books that can be purchased by any individual to approximately \$60 per month. Therefore the maximum subsidy per person is \$30 per month. These type of controls are essential in a consumer choice program because providing opportunity for on-demand door-to-door service has increased demand for paratransit services everywhere it has been implemented. Should enrollment in the program exceed expectations, MCTD would have the option of reducing the amount of scrip available or reducing the subsidy to ensure the viability of the program.

Consumers would have the option of using taxi scrip or Whistlestop Wheels service for any trip they are making. A rider traveling to a doctor's appointment, for example, may choose to reserve a Whistlestop ride on the way TO the doctor, when the arrival time is scheduled and predictable, and may choose to take a taxi HOME when the departure time from the doctor is less certain. Paratransit riders may choose the taxi when a direct ride is most important to them, rather than the Whistlestop shared ride concept, which can increase time on the vehicle.

Allowing consumers to choose which service best meets their needs is positive for both consumers and for service providers. Because some riders will choose taxis for some or all of their trips, growth in demand for Whistlestop services should be contained, and Whistlestop should be better able to meet the volume of calls it receives. The intent is that everyone would receive better service by allowing consumers who can afford and choose to use taxi service to do so.

A key component of a consumer choice program is the availability of accessible

vehicles. Because this service would supplement the mandated ADA service, it would not be subject to ADA requirements. However as a matter of "equal access" it is preferable not to offer on-demand service available to some riders and not others. To implement a consumer choice program, MCTD would therefore need to purchase at least two, and up to five, wheelchair accessible taxis, similar to the taxis being used in San Francisco and other major metropolitan areas. MCTD or Marin County would retain title to the accessible vehicles, which would be insured under the County's fleet insurance. This is important, because taxi companies generally do not carry collision insurance, and would not be interested in insuring a new vehicle while operating at the metered rate.

Vehicles would be leased to cab companies for the cost of insurance. The cab companies receiving the vehicles would be required to give priority to calls requiring accessible vehicles on those cabs, but will be allowed to carry any trip on the vehicles during their service day. Ambulatory consumers using scrip could be serviced in any vehicle in the taxi fleet. MCTD would retain the right to inspect the vehicles at least twice each year to monitor maintenance and condition of the vehicles.

In a consumer choice program, it is generally not necessary for the cab companies to have a contract with the County. The current JPA agreement for taxi licensing in Marin could easily be modified to require all taxis in the County to accept scrip as payment for trips.

Based on the response in other Counties, it is estimated that approximately 200 participants would purchase up to \$60 in scrip per month. This total of \$144,000 represents up to \$72,000 in subsidy. However, some of these trips would currently be trips made on Whistlestop Wheels, which is more heavily subsidized.

Therefore the net operating cost for the consumer choice program is expected to be approximately \$50,000 per year, roughly the same amount as the contractor's choice program.

Assuming MCTD chooses to purchase accessible vehicles, no fewer than two vehicles could be purchased initially, at a cost of about \$40,000 per vehicle. Ramp taxi vehicles are recommended rather than lift vans for speed of loading and unloading, gas mileage and flexibility in carrying other passengers. Maintenance would be provided by the taxi companies, subject to semi-annual inspection by the County.

It is difficult to determine a timeframe for implementation of this program, especially if vehicles need to be purchased. However, the program should be implemented as soon as possible, perhaps beginning as a pilot program.

There are a number of issues to be resolved prior to implementation:

1. **Capacity** – The taxi companies indicated that they have capacity available from 10 AM to 2 PM, but that they are generally fully committed with other work during the peak travel periods. This is largely because they provide services to special education students at schools and services to Regional Center clients going to programs. All of the taxi companies indicated a willingness to expand but not in advance of knowing the market.
2. **Random Drug Testing** – If MCTD becomes a federal recipient it will require both pre-employment, accident related and random drug testing of drivers, as required by federal law. The current taxi ordinance does allow for random testing, but it has not yet been implemented. MCTD may be required to establish a random drug testing program at its expense. This can be done, but is an administrative issue and a cost item beyond the meter rate.

3. **Insurance** – All of the taxi operators indicate that they carry only \$350,000 in liability insurance and no collision insurance on their vehicles. Most transit operators require at least \$1,000,000 in liability and if the transit district buys an accessible vehicle, it would certainly want collision coverage. The taxi companies have indicated that they would not be willing to increase their insurance and work at the metered rate.

Insurance issues have been a barrier for many taxi operations. In some places, such as the City of Berkeley, the issue of insurance has been avoided by simply amending the taxi ordinance to require all cab companies to accept scrip issued by the City. Consumers call the taxi company of their choice, and there is no contractual arrangement between the public agency and the taxi company. If MCTD were to purchase accessible vehicles, it would need to ensure that those vehicles were properly insured. By having the District or the County hold title to the vehicles, it may be possible to insure them under the County insurance pool, leasing them back to the taxi companies for the price of insurance.

Additional study of insurance issues will be completed as part of an MTC funded implementation study on taxi options, scheduled to be completed in 2006.

4. **Other Issues Involved in Taxi Operation**
In outreach to the taxi industry, the taxi companies presented a number of other issues, all of which are probably solvable:
 - a. **Tipping** – Some drivers are dependant on their tips as income. Knowing that low income paratransit riders and transit riders would likely not tip, some drivers may not provide adequate service, or may intimidate riders into tipping. The Transit District would need to provide driver training and would require drivers who participate in the program to agree to accept the full meter rate but not to

expect additional tips for their rides. This is probably not a major barrier, especially if the program provides rides during the 10-2 period when taxis are under utilized.

- b. **Loading and Unloading Time** – State law does not allow taxi companies to turn on the meter until wheelchair customers are loaded and secured in the vehicle. The meter must be turned off when the vehicle arrives at the destination, even though it takes considerable time to unsecure and unload the passenger. Drivers carrying a large number of wheelchair passengers would find this very inconvenient and potentially expensive, since time spent “sitting” is real money to taxi drivers. The relatively low volume of accessible taxi calls should minimize this issue, but if wheelchair calls increased, it could be a problem.
- c. **Driver Training** – Whistlestop and Golden Gate drivers are all required to take extensive training courses, including sensitivity training for working with persons with disabilities. Taxi operators are not required to take such training and are generally not employees on salary who could be compelled to take the training. A program of certifying drivers for this type of service could be developed, where the driver would be required to take a training course provided at no cost to them, and offered during mid-day hours when calls tend to be slow. The need for training is limited somewhat if the program is a “consumer choice” program where the customer has the option of choosing a more highly trained driver if they prefer.

Serving Non-Mandated Trips

Currently, the public has the same expectation for service regardless of where they live in the

County. Eligible riders living beyond the mandated service area often do not understand why they are not able to get service. Whistlestop has taken steps to ensure that riders in the mandated service area receive paratransit service as required by law; this has resulted in riders outside of the mandated service area experiencing high denial rates. At times, a rider in the non-mandated service area has a 1 in 4 chance of not getting a ride, and most riders making requests for rides outside of the mandated area are put on a “stand by list” and may not be informed whether they will get a ride until the day before their trip. This uncertainty is very difficult to deal with when the primary trip purpose on paratransit is access to medical trips.

The need to travel outside of the mandated service is exacerbated by the location of a number of senior housing facilities outside of the mandated area. Senior housing centers sometimes receive limited or no mandated paratransit service, despite high potential demands. While land use policy is outside of MCTD’s purview, cities should be aware that allowing senior housing and facilities that attract seniors and persons with disabilities to locate away from the main corridors will have a negative impact on the facility’s ability to get service.

Rather than providing less reliable paratransit service to the non-mandated service area, investment should be made in providing different types of services in the non-mandated area. These include:

- Partnering with Community Based Agencies and Housing Complexes
- Utilizing Local Initiative Services to Supplement Paratransit
- Adding a tax component

Partnering with Community Based Agencies and Housing Complexes

King County in Washington State offers a unique program called the Community Partnership Program. This program is designed to complement the basic ADA service, which is not extended beyond the mandated service area, by filling in gaps in service that would otherwise go unfilled. The goal is to create innovative and less expensive alternative transportation tools for seniors and people with disabilities. Under this program, used paratransit vehicles and operating subsidies are offered to community agencies who agree to provide at least a minimum number of trips to ADA certified consumers.

For example, a senior housing complex may receive a vehicle and \$25,000 per year, with the promise that they will carry at least 1000 ADA eligible trips per year, or about 80 per month. The housing complex matches the operating dollars and starts their own resident transportation service. The complex can carry anyone they want and go anywhere they choose to go, as long as about 85 of those monthly trips are made by ADA certified travelers. A senior housing complex where some, but not all, of its residents are ADA eligible, will take advantage of the subsidy to provide some level of service to all of its residents. Using these numbers, each ADA trip would cost \$25.00 in subsidy per trip – substantially less than if the trip were made on Whistlestop Wheels.

The advantages of this type of partnership go beyond saving money. Drivers from the community-based programs are often volunteers or staff who have other functions with the agency. They are very familiar with the consumers from their program and can develop a service

that is geared to their needs. Consumers who participate in these programs often make trips that they would not even attempt to make on the mandated service provider.

In King County, over 30 vehicles have been distributed throughout the County, to agencies as varied as a Wheelchair Ski Group, which carries ADA eligible and non-eligible riders to nearby ski slopes; to assisted living complexes; and adult day centers. Because the recipients of these vehicles carry ADA eligible riders at a fraction of the cost of providing the ride with their regular ADA provider, the community and the riders benefit.

In addition to providing retired vehicles, MCTD could also help non-profits to seek vehicles under the 5310 program available for non-profits providing paratransit services; and could enter into different types of arrangements with organizations that have their own vehicle to offer.

A program like this will develop over time, as vehicles become available. The first step is to gauge interest in the community and identify possible operators.

Partnering with Local Initiative Services

Local initiative services were described in the service plan. They are designed to provide an opportunity for MCTD to partner with local jurisdictions. As local communities develop their plans for local shuttle services, the need for services for seniors and persons with disabilities should be considered. Operating cost subsidies from MCTD may come from either fixed route or special needs funds, depending on the number of special needs riders that would be served by the proposed route.

“Grandfathering” Areas Losing Coverage

As described in Chapter 3, a small number of residents in Marin County overall will lose local bus coverage in the proposed service plan. The impact of these changes on fixed route riders is expected to be minimal. For the small number of paratransit riders, especially those in Santa Venetia and Pt. San Pedro, the difference between being in the mandated service area and being outside the area could be dramatic.

While the number of paratransit riders affected by these changes is small (estimated at less than 20), a transition period of three years is recommended, allowing current registered riders in these areas to be treated as if they remain in the mandated service area. This is not intended to set a precedent for future service reductions. It is intended to allow time for alternative programs proposed in the SRTP to be implemented and for riders to become aware of the options available to them.

Paratransit Fares

The performance goals presented in Chapter 2 include a goal for maintaining mandated paratransit fares at the full cash price for fixed route transit, even though the law allows paratransit fares to be twice that amount. The relatively high cost of fixed route fares would currently allow a \$4.00 one-way ADA paratransit fare. However, given that two-thirds of the ADA paratransit riders live in households with annual incomes of less than \$25,000, the negative impact on riders could outweigh the additional revenue from this increase.

Instead of increasing fares for mandated service, a number of fare recommendations are included in the financial plan:

1. **Provide a mid-day pass for ADA eligible riders, allowing them to ride local transit routes at no charge.** While most paratransit riders cannot use fixed route services at any cost, some will be able to use MCTD services for some of their trips. This will be an added incentive to take advantage of travel training. Although MCTD will forgo the fare for these riders, the cost of providing a fixed route trip is far less than the cost of providing a paratransit trip, and the increase in ridership from this program is not expected to have any impact on capacity.
2. **Institute an agency fare policy.** Currently, Senior Access, the Adult Day program in Novato is the only social service agency receiving a significant amount of direct service from the paratransit program. The service provided to Senior Access clients is a higher level than that provided to the general eligible public. Clients of Senior Access do not need to call in for each ride – a coordinator at the program takes care of their transportation. They do not need to call directly if they miss a ride – again, the program takes care of all the logistics. Most important, Senior Access clients are assured a ride, with no denials, with a consistent driver on a consistent route. Senior Access clients are assured to get to their program on time and have a specific pick-up time that they can count on.

Currently, the paratransit program provides 8 bus-days of service each week to the program, and the program contracts directly for an additional 24 bus-days of service. There is no particular reason for the 8 bus-days – it simply evolved over time. For the service provided by paratransit, Senior Access currently pays only the fares for their riders, or about \$11,000 per year.

Senior Access riders receive an unprecedented level of service with no extra fare. The actual marginal cost of providing their service would be approximately \$30,000. While all of their clients would be eligible for ADA service, and could make individual trip reservations, it is unlikely that the level of service available to their clients would be adequate for their needs. Some clients would find another way to get to their program, or there would be increasing pressure on the program to provide their own transportation.

Although Senior Access is the only agency currently receiving these special services, other social service agencies might also like to take advantage of an agency service. Other paratransit programs offer these types of services for an “agency fare” that exceeds the cost of normal paratransit fare and more closely reflects the cost of providing service.

Another example of an agency that may require specialized services is Satellite Dialysis, which is placing a growing burden on paratransit resources. Riders going to dialysis need to be delivered at a specific time, often very early in the morning when little fixed route service is running. Patients are often late for their return trip and may be too weak to tolerate a standard shared ride. While Whistlestop and MCTD have worked very hard to accommodate these riders, the specialized nature of their needs exceeds the service MCTD can reasonably provide at current subsidy levels.

In setting an agency fare, it is important to recognize that agency trips do allow Whistlestop to group rides together and improve overall productivity. Therefore, a “compromise” fare is recommended, set at twice the fare for regular non-mandated trips, or \$5.00 per trip. Revenue from Senior Access would increase from \$11,000 to about \$22,000 under this proposal. Other agencies interested in

this type of service could also make an arrangement with Whistlestop for the agency fare.

The agency fares come with the following benefits over and above the standard service. These benefits are currently essentially being “given away” by MCTD:

- o Automatic subscription trips, essentially providing guaranteed capacity
- o Ability to change schedules until 3 PM the day before
- o Scheduled arrival time at the agency (versus a window for unaffiliated individuals)

In San Mateo County, they have had a program of agency fares with 6 different agencies for some time. On “top of” their standard fare of \$2.00 they charge up to \$3.35 per trip (they have slightly different arrangements with each agency) for agency trips. If MCTD charged Senior Access \$3.35 per trip, the fares related to that service would increase from the current \$6,000 to about \$15,000, or about half of the actual marginal cost of the trip.

Public Process and Outreach

It is very important that MCTD conduct educational outreach to key stakeholders prior to implementing some of the recommendations in this section. A public participation process targeted to paratransit consumers should precede changes to the paratransit program.

Contracting for Paratransit Service

Although this chapter identifies a number of supplemental services that will augment the traditional paratransit historically provided by Whistlestop Wheels, there will be an on-going

and increasing need for exactly the type of services Whistlestop provides.

Marin County Transit and Golden Gate Transit have contracted for van services with the Senior Coordinating Council for more than 20 years. Over the years there have been occasional bids for the service, but there has been no attempt to encourage competition for the contract.

Changing paratransit vendors can be very disruptive to clients who depend on relationships with drivers and dispatchers for their service. However, it is in MCTD's interest to routinely bid out the paratransit contract, testing the marketplace for both cost and service reputation.

When the next opportunity to bid paratransit service occurs, MCTD should consider a separate bid for eligibility analysis – separating the function of eligibility determination from the function of providing service. MCTD has recently adopted the updated regional ADA eligibility process, which calls for many more in person assessments. These types of assessments are generally much more effective if done through a medical services provider or rehabilitation specialist. Other systems that have chosen to use professional evaluators have found that eligibility has dropped slightly and that many more riders become conditionally eligible; allowing the system to concentrate resources where they are truly needed.

CHAPTER 5 MARKETING PLAN

MCTD may be the largest transit system that remains essentially “invisible” to its customers – most riders have no idea that they are riding an MCTD route when traveling in Marin County. This section provides both general marketing and outreach recommendations and more targeted marketing recommendations to reach specific markets.

System Identity

As MCTD has increased responsibility for local service, it needs its customers to be able to reach the district and to participate in designing the local system. Currently, local riders call Golden Gate Transit when they have questions or concerns, only to be frustrated by being redirected.

For customers to understand the difference between the regional and local transit systems, it is important for MCTD to have its own identity. Basic elements of this identity include:

- Development of a logo and color scheme – a transitional logo and color scheme was adopted for this Short Range Transit Plan and used on the website developed as part of this project. The logo and color scheme are distinct from, but coordinate with the TAM and Golden Gate Transit identity. MCTD should take action to formally adopt this logo and color scheme, and use it consistently on all things seen by the public. This includes putting their logo on all buses operating on local routes; on bus stop signs at all local stops; on all dedicated local transit buses; and on the Transit Guide, which includes schedules and other information for the combined local and regional system.

- Similarly, fare media, such as multi-ride tickets, need to incorporate the MCTD logo and MCTD information. Developing a local identity is not contrary to the goal of developing a seamless transit system but will allow Marin residents to better understand their local system.
- Bus stop signage is generally quite poor throughout the system. A new standard bus stop sign should be developed with the appropriate identity, including identifying local and regional routes separately on the sign. Bus stop standards are addressed in the Capital Plan chapter (Chapter 6) of this report.



- The MCTD web address should be included on all material. The MCTD site was prepared as part of the Short Range Plan and should be maintained as the primary site for information about MCTD’s services. The site should be enhanced with easy forms for complaints and commendations which can go directly to MCTD. All websites that include links to MCTD documents and all links on the MCTD website should be monitored and kept current.
- All marketing materials providing important information to riders should be provided in Spanish and English and be available in accessible formats. Nearly 40% of the on-board survey respondents utilized the Spanish survey form.
- MCTD must be visible in the community. This kind of “retail marketing” is especially necessary during the early years

of system development, and includes speaking regularly at Chamber of Commerce events, school district functions, health fairs, the County Fair and other opportunities to get the word out about what MCTD is and what it does.

Outreach to Target Groups

While general outreach and education are critical for MCTD, marketing to specific groups is also important. This section contains specific recommendations for marketing to:

- Youth Riders
- Seniors
- Employers
- Bike Riders
- Existing Riders
- Visitors to Marin County

Marketing to Youth Riders

MCTD has already been very successful at attracting youth riders. Youth ridership on MCTD increased significantly as a result of the Ride and Roll free ride demonstration program, which ended in June 2004. With the advent of the \$1.00 youth fare, MCTD will need to ensure that youth ridership does not dramatically fall off, as the “free ride” is replaced with the “discounted ride.”

An annual or monthly pass is one technique that can encourage youth ridership by allowing families to “pay once” for unlimited rides. Annual passes can be designed to appeal to youth riders, mimicking a ski lift ticket, or “back stage pass” for a concert event. When an annual pass is purchased, youth riders should receive a pass holder with a lanyard rope that has the MCTD logo and a design that will appeal to student riders.



Transit services should be marketed through schools, park districts and other venues that attract youth riders. Most schools in Marin County have a system for sending material home to parents. Sending information about bus routes to the school, along with a “try a ride for free” ticket that can be used by any youth rider would encourage an introduction to transit at low cost. Park districts in Marin County usually mail out information to all households about summer activities and classes available through the parks. These should also include transit information to all local facilities and the MCTD logo and phone number. As with school information, a “try a ride” ticket may also be included.

Coordinating the public transit system and the Safe Routes to Schools program is another excellent way of reaching youth riders. To



some extent, Safe Routes staff already does this. Safe Routes could promote “bus buddies” by matching students traveling from a given neighborhood to school, matching them up to ride transit together. Safe Routes could also distribute information targeted to the transit services available at each school.

Involving students and youth riders from the community in their transit system encourages youth “ownership” of the system. As MCTD develops local bus shelters and increases its physical presence in the community, students should be encouraged to submit artwork and participate in the design process. In Phoenix, Arizona, an annual contest awards prizes to three local students in elementary, middle and high school by “wrapping” a local bus in one of their winning designs. The contest draws extensive positive free press that continues after the contest as the wrapped buses are seen throughout the system.

Local initiative services also offer a perfect way to involve students in naming and designing a special identity for their own local services.

Marketing to Seniors

Only 4% of MCTD’s riders are over age 65, compared with 13.5% of the Marin County population. This is not surprising since seniors



who have not been lifelong transit users find it difficult to transition to fixed route transit and often transition directly from driving everywhere themselves to taking paratransit when they are no longer able to drive. Seniors who no longer work also do not make the kind of regular planned trips that commuters and students make; infrequent trips are more difficult to attract to transit, especially when the traveler is unfamiliar with the system.

A key to increasing senior ridership is making the system more comfortable and familiar to senior riders. Of course, this process should begin long before the rider is no longer able to drive.

Smaller, Low Floor Vehicles

Vehicles that are more accessible and comfortable for all riders are especially appreciated by seniors. Smaller buses allow seniors to sit in clear view of the driver whether they are sitting in designated seats or not. One design feature that is especially important to seniors is the low floor bus. Steep bus steps are a barrier for many riders who may use a cane or walker, or who may not have the flexibility and leg strength to manage bus steps with ease. Low floor vehicles generally board wheelchairs with a ramp rather than a mechanical lift – saving maintenance and reliability problems that lifts often introduce and providing increased accessibility for all riders. While low floor small vehicles have not routinely been funded through the sources used for Whistlestop vehicles, these vehicles are gaining more acceptance. New small vehicles purchased for MCTD’s service should utilize these design elements where possible.

Accessible Formats

Transit schedules are daunting for senior readers, because they often involve very small print and complex reading. All materials geared to seniors should be as easy to read as possible, and should include a telephone number that can be answered by a “live” person to provide additional information. Use of large font size and high contrast colors should be emphasized in designing materials for seniors.

Transit Ambassador Program

A transit ambassador program is a “peer training” program that allows seniors to teach others how to use the transit system. Ambassadors are usually unpaid, although they may be given a free transit pass as long as they are serving as an ambassador. Transit ambassadors would be trained by MCTD and would provide one-on-one help to seniors who are interested in learning the system. Interested seniors can sign up for an ambassador trip through senior centers, senior residential sites and other places where seniors congregate, or by calling MCTD. In addition anyone who applies for ADA paratransit, but is denied, would be informed about the ambassador program.

Successful ambassador programs have been implemented in Napa and Nevada Counties, among others.

Free Transit Pass for ADA Eligible Riders

To be certified as ADA eligible, a customer is expected to be unable to use the fixed route transit system. However, in reality, many people who are ADA eligible can use fixed route transit for at least some of their trips. Transit systems,

like the system in Las Vegas, NV, sometimes provide a free transit pass to ADA eligible riders to encourage them to use fixed route services for as many of their trips as possible. With paratransit trips requiring subsidies of over \$35.00 per trip compared to about \$5.00 for fixed route, any trip that can be converted to fixed route is helpful to MCTD. Depending on crowding, the ADA pass may be limited to midday trips, when bus routes generally have more room.

Outreach to Senior Residences and Senior Centers

Information and education are a critical component of all marketing plans. Personal outreach to senior residential complexes and senior centers can generate interest in the transit system. Combining a visit from transit staff with an escorted ride on the system will combine the concept of “ambassadorship” with education and will start the process of encouraging more trips on the fixed route system.

Outreach at DMV

Often the first time a senior finds out he/she shouldn't be driving is at the Department of



Motor Vehicles, with a failed driving test. This is a very difficult, emotional time to be learning about the transit system. However, MCTD can help make that transition work better by providing a packet of information to DMV that can be distributed to any senior taking the license test. The information should be geared to senior consumers and may include a free ride pass for a first trip. “55 Alive” and other classes are routinely offered to help seniors drive safely. In Marin County, transit information should be distributed in those classes to show transit as a viable option.

Marketing to Employers

Involving employers in transit outreach is a very effective way of targeting information to individuals whose trips are most easily served by transit, and who tend to travel during high impact times. Marketing to employers and their employees requires a comprehensive approach that combines targeted information with Transportation Demand Management techniques that maximize overall mobility. **The following recommendations may be implemented by agencies other than the transit district, but should be coordinated with transit district efforts.**

Pre-tax sales

Probably the simplest program targeted to employers is the pre-tax sales program. The IRS allows employers to establish a program where employees can purchase their transit tickets with pre-tax dollars. In the Bay Area, the CommuterChecks and WageWorks programs are commonly used as the agents, mailing transit tickets of the employees choice directly

to their home. Once employees sign up for the program, their transit fare is deducted, pre-tax, from their paycheck and the employer transfers funds to the agent once each month. Loss or other problems with tickets are handled directly by the agent, and employees can choose their fare instruments on-line. When Translink automated fare instruments become widely accepted in the Bay Area, it will be possible to add value to your Translink ticket in a similar way. As MCTD develops marketing staff, it should assist employers with this easy to use program.

Universal Pass

Universal transit passes have been shown to increase ridership by as much as 15% among groups receiving the pass. Universal passes are targeted to colleges, large employers and collections of employers at a single site. All employees/students at a particular site are given a transit pass that allows for unlimited free rides on the local system. In exchange, a fee is collected for everyone at that site, whether they use the transit pass or not. There are a number of very successful examples of universal passes in the Bay Area, including the UC Berkeley pass for AC Transit. The per person fee collected for the universal pass can be relatively low – in the case of UC Berkeley, about \$25 per semester is added to student fees to pay for the transit pass. Although many students do not ride AC Transit often, by spreading the subsidy across all students, free or low-cost transit can be offered to everyone. This would be an ideal program for College of Marin, but could also be extended to large employers who are reasonably well served by transit.

Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)

Guaranteed Ride Home programs are designed to provide “insurance” by offering a free taxi ride home to any enrollee who either needs an emergency ride home during the day, or who is unexpectedly required to work overtime and misses their last transit connection. GRH is usually extended to enrollees who use any alternative mode, including carpooling, biking and walking to work, as well as transit service. GRH has been implemented in many parts of the Bay Area, including Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Generally speaking, employers must register with the program as well as individual employees. Enrolled employees receive an emergency voucher, which can be used for taxi rides, or in some cases for rental cars using a car company that delivers and picks up (such as Enterprise). There is generally no cost to either employers or employees and very little administrative burden. Employees can use their GRH voucher on days when they have used an alternative mode to get to work. A new voucher is sent to replace one that is used.

Programs vary, but generally accepted reasons for using GRH include:

- Enrollee or family member suffers an unexpected illness, injury or crisis
- Enrollee is required to work unexpected overtime
- Ridesharing vehicle breaks down or the driver must leave early
- Break-in, flood or fire at enrollees residence.

GRH cannot be used for personal errands, non-emergency side trips or pre-planned appointments. As a control, enrollees are generally

allowed a limited number of annual trips. In Alameda County for example, enrollees may use up to 6 trips per year; however, in reality, the program is used far less. In Alameda County, the use per enrollee is less than one trip per person. While GRH programs are not heavily used, they remove one of the most significant barriers to taking an alternative commute mode to work – the fear that the customer would not be able to get home in an emergency, especially sick children, or an unexpected change in hours. A guaranteed ride home program would not be implemented by the transit district, but would be part of an overall strategy to increase alternative mode use.

Real time information

Real time information can provide “next bus” information at bus stops, but can also be used to let customers know when the next bus is coming before they leave their home or work place. The City of Seattle has recently developed a real time information program using Google maps that can identify the location of any bus on a route; provide real-time information about the next bus and can notify the customer, either by e-mail or PDA a standard number of minutes before the bus arrives. Other similar systems are offered through Next Bus, a company based in Emeryville, which offers an “alarm clock” that will ring and notify the customer a standard amount of time before the bus comes.

All of these technologies require automated vehicle location devices on board the vehicle. These devices vary in price depending on the application but do cost upwards of \$1000 per unit. Golden Gate Transit is seeking grant funds to deploy real time information on the

regional fleet. There may be future opportunities to add real time information at local stops on local routes.



City CarShare

City CarShare is a non-profit company operating in San Francisco and the East Bay, providing short-term car rentals to individuals with an occasional need for a car. Providing car share vehicles at transit stops allows people to choose the best alternative for their trip. City CarShare often allows a one-car household to avoid buying the second car, increasing their transit use. Carshares near employer sites allow employees to disconnect their commute mode from their possible need for a vehicle during the day for work-related trips, errands, etc. Budget limitations do not allow MCTD to subsidize carshare programs in Marin County, but MCTD should work with rideshare programs, and carshare providers. If carshare vehicles are located in Marin County, MCTD should share marketing information and otherwise facilitate its use in Marin County.

Other Transit Incentives

Many transit districts have developed other creative incentive programs linking transit to other transit demand measures. A TDM coordinator can offer free transit tickets to carpool riders who want to be able to use transit to go out at

lunchtime. Parking cash out programs have become increasingly popular in larger metro areas – employers begin charging employees for parking, and provide a raise or bonus equal to the amount of the parking charge. Employees who choose to buy a transit pass, can pocket the rest of their “raise” by giving up their parking space. This makes clear to the employee the cost of maintaining a parking space and provides essentially the same subsidy for all modes. In places where parking cash out has been tried, single occupant driving to work has dropped between 10 and 15%.

511.org, a one-stop shop for transportation information in the Bay Area, provides information and resources for employers to develop a TDM program, including free onsite consultation and marketing, as well as employee transportation surveys, rideshare matching and other commute incentives. MCTD should coordinate with 511.org and employers to provide incentives to employers and conduct cooperative marketing efforts.

The proposed Local Initiative program provides an added opportunity for MCTD to work with



employers to develop transit service that are focused on the needs of a single employer, providing shuttle style services that are supported by the employer and by the transit district.

Bicycle Riders and Transit

Bicycle riders are another target group that may be interested in combining the “green modes” of bike riding with transit. This market overlaps with youth riders who may have grown up with Safe Routes to Schools education and are now interested in maintaining their positive commute choices.

Bicycle riders are interested in being able to carry their bikes on transit and storing their bikes in safe locations near transit stops. Bicycle storage racks are recommended for high volume transit stops and covered storage is recommended where space is available at transit hubs. In addition, higher capacity bicycle racks are recommended for new buses.

To encourage bicycle/transit combinations, MCTD should work with the Bicycle Coalition and other groups to promote “Extend Your Reach” trips that show how the combination of biking and taking transit can make key destinations more accessible.

Recreational Trips

The very successful Route 66 service to Muir Woods, which was demonstrated this summer, shows that a comprehensive marketing effort can draw visitors off of the highway and onto transit. Nearly 50% of all riders on the Route 66 originated their trip in San Francisco, and over half of these originated at local hotels. The key to this success was distributing brochures to all San Francisco hotels and working with

hotel concierges to ensure that they knew how to promote the service. A number of visitors used transit to reach the Muir Woods shuttle, but most drove over the Golden Gate Bridge to local park and ride lots. Having available park and ride facilities is another key to success, since visitors are often traveling to more than one location in the North Bay on a given day, and generally do not want to return to San Francisco directly.

Information about recreational travel by transit should be marketed in both a targeted (each individual site) and comprehensive way. Opportunities for targeted marketing include:

- “Bike and Bus Trips in Marin County” – showing locations where bike riders may enjoy a transit trip connecting to a pleasant and well-marked bikeway.
- Muir Woods Shuttle
- Transit to West Marin – combining information about the weekend service on Route 63 with Stagecoach information that is focused on visitors.
- Other recreational locations that are well served by transit such as Sausalito’s Bridgeway, and other parks and recreational opportunities.

In addition, MCTD should continue its partnership with the National Park Service to improve transit access to the national parks in Marin County. Currently, there is minimal service to the Headlands and Ft. Baker, although many buses go by the area on the highway. Working in conjunction with the park service to either deviate service to the park on seasonal weekends, or to provide a shuttle connection from the park that would allow riders throughout Golden Gate’s multi-county service area to reach these national treasures.

Marketing Budget

Basic marketing need not be expensive. Staffing for enhanced marketing is included in the organizational plan for MCTD. Other items, such as signage, are included in the capital plan and can be matched with grants. A budget of at least \$100,000 should be set aside annually for brochures and marketing materials, in addition to staffing and capital costs. This is reflected in the financial plan provided in Chapter 7. Where possible, MCTD should leverage other marketing efforts, such as the regional 511 transit information system, Golden Gate's Transit Guide and other materials, and existing forums to extend marketing dollars. In addition, MCTD should work with other transit providers to provide seamless transit information about all alternatives available in and around Marin County.

CHAPTER 6 CAPITAL PLAN

The Capital Improvement Program developed for MCTD is intended to address the most pressing issues in the system and to position MCTD to maximize its contracting options in the longer term.

Planning capital improvements for any transit system are complicated by the fact that all transit systems rely on capital grants and the speed at which projects can be completed is dependant on capital grant procurement. A list of capital grant options is provided at the end of this chapter. Many capital grants require matching funds, which MCTD would need to provide through Measure A capital and other funding sources.

Capital Component of the MCTD-Golden Gate Contract

The newly signed contract between MCTD and Golden Gate Transit includes provisions for MCTD to begin sharing responsibility for the capital required to operate the local system. This is a substantial change from previous contracts where capital requirements were simply included in the hourly operating cost for service. The new contract calls for MCTD to make a capital contribution to the combined MCTD/Golden Gate system in three areas:

1. Matching Funds for Local Buses

– Buses that are used entirely for local service will be purchased through state and federal funds available to Golden Gate Transit and MCTD, with MCTD fully responsible for the local match on those vehicles. Unless or until MCTD becomes an eligible

federal recipient, Golden Gate Transit will continue to be the grantee for federal funds, with MCTD providing the full match for the local fleet. Buses used entirely for local service would include the small bus fleet, required to implement the small bus service in this plan. Federal funds are generally available for 80% of the cost of replacement vehicles, even if a smaller bus is purchased to replace a larger one. All vehicles will meet the California Air Resource Board (CARB) clean fuel requirements.

2. Proportional Matching Funds for Shared Buses

– In addition to assuming responsibility for the local match on buses that are used entirely for local service, MCTD will be responsible for providing matching funds for buses that are used on BOTH local and regional service, in an amount that is proportional to the mileage used for each service. The mileage calculation will be based on systemwide mileage rather than assessing mileage on individual bus procurements.

3. System-wide Capital Contribution

– Golden Gate Transit has historically provided other capital items, including bus facilities, used by the local system. In the new contract, MCTD has agreed to pay a fixed amount of approximately \$430,000 annually for the five years of the contract to cover the facility costs of the local service.

At the conclusion of the five-year contract, MCTD may either take title to and “own” vehicles purchased with local funds or will receive the proceeds from the sale of any vehicles paid for in part with local transit funds. Contributions to system-wide capital will not result in MCTD “owning” any part of Golden Gate’s facilities at the end of the contract period.

These three capital priorities are requirements of the upcoming contract. The ability to implement additional priorities will depend on the availability of discretionary grants and matching funds.

Additional Capital Priorities

MCTD has operated as a transit system for nearly 40 years without actually owning any facilities and very few vehicles. MCTD has never had responsibility for local bus stops or for providing amenities to its passengers. With the realignment of responsibilities that has occurred over the past several years, MCTD must now take a lead role in providing a comfortable and convenient customer experience.

The proposed service plan will require a fleet of approximately 60 vehicles for fixed-route service, including 49 active duty vehicles plus spares. An estimated 34 full-sized and 15 smaller vehicles¹ are needed for daily operation assuming there is *no* overlap between the regional and local fleet. Of these, MCTD currently owns only three buses, used for the Stage, that are undersized for its service demand.

In addition, Whistlestop Wheels operates 47

¹ Includes 20% spares added to peak pull out requirements.

vehicles for paratransit service, 24 of which are owned by MCTD, including 10 vehicles that have recently been acquired. These vehicles require regular replacement. Federal funds are available for 80% of the cost of a paratransit vehicle, with a 20% match required.

There is a backlog of demand for capital improvements due to a scarcity of transit funds and the MCTD’s increased role in local service planning. Priorities for this capital plan include:

1. Replacement of existing paratransit vehicles based on the life cycle estimated by FTA, and expansion of the paratransit fleet.
2. Acquisition of higher capacity small buses for the Stage to eliminate pass-ups.
3. Development of a safe and convenient off-street transfer center in Novato.
4. Bus stop improvements throughout the system, beginning with the most heavily used stops, completed in cooperation with local entities.
5. Acquisition of accessible taxi vehicles to implement a pilot program for subsidized taxi as a supplement to paratransit.

These projects are not presented in priority order, as each of these is a critical priority for the system.

Should additional funding be available, the next highest priorities would include:

1. Real-time information at transit centers and all key stops.
2. Enhanced information opportunities for web based and other real time technologies.
3. Addition of an improved transit center in Southern Marin.

The following describes each capital project included in the Short Range Transit Plan.

Replacement of Existing Paratransit Vehicles

Whistlestop Wheels vehicles have been purchased through a variety of grant programs; with the result being that as of November 1, 2005, Whistlestop Wheels owns 23 of the 47 vehicles used for paratransit, and MCTD owns 24 paratransit vehicles. The combined fleet is used to operate all of the Whistlestop Wheels paratransit programs.

The granting agency determines the life cycle of all vehicles purchased with grant funds. The type of buses used for paratransit have relatively short life cycles and are generally scheduled for replacement in five to seven years depending on how they were procured.

In addition to replacing vehicles, the plan anticipates a need to increase the total fleet by about 10% over the 10-year period. Expansion vehicles are more difficult to fund than replacement vehicles.

Typically, federal funds (5307 Capital Funds or 5310 Capital Funds) are used for 80% of the cost of paratransit vehicles and ancillary equipment. MCTD has acquired these vehicles through a pass-through agreement with Golden Gate Transit, where Golden Gate Transit is the official recipient of the federal funds. Depending on the source of funding, these vehicles are replaced every 5-7 years.

In prior years, the Marin Community Foundation has provided the match for paratransit vehicles in the region. A total of nearly \$5 million will be needed for replacing and expanding the paratransit fleet. Approximately \$1 million in Foundation funding would match \$4 million in federal funds for vehicle replacements and expansions.

Small Buses for Rural Service

Higher capacity buses are needed immediately on the Stagecoach routes to eliminate pass-ups. Typically, pass-ups occur during the fall and spring semester change at local schools. Once students have been “passed up”, they tend to find an alternative to the bus, and don’t come back to the Stage even when room may be available. By avoiding pass-ups in the first place, ridership will be maximized.

Given the nature of this community service and the roads it uses, vehicles larger than 22 passengers are likely impractical. To avoid pass-ups at the present time, vehicles no smaller than 18-passengers are required. A total of three buses (two for service, one spare) are required in the rural service plan. These buses are estimated to cost up to \$150,000 for conventional buses and up to \$300,000 for hybrid buses and have a life span of up to 12 years.

Rural service buses are typically funded up to 80% with discretionary FTA 5311 Rural Transit Funds. These funds are available to MCTD through a pass through agreement with Golden Gate Transit that allows Golden Gate to be the federal recipient of funds. Assuming 5311 funds remain a possibility for funding 80% of the cost for buses for the rural system, for its 20% portion of the cost, MCTD would be required to contribute \$90,000 to purchase three conventional vehicles, or \$180,000 for hybrid vehicles. These vehicles would be consistent with the overall small bus fleet acquired for local service.

It should be noted that while hybrid vehicles may be preferable, all buses purchased by MCTD will need to meet the California Air Resources Board (CARB) requirements for clean fuel buses. Any bus purchased in this plan will

be “clean fuel” as defined by CARB.

Novato Transfer Facility

The passenger survey and counts showed that one reason transit ridership in Novato remains lower than expected is the lack of a convenient and safe place for making transfers. Current routes 57 and 59 are too circuitous to be used for travel on the corridor and are proposed to be replaced by local routes that will need a safe place to connect with corridor routes. A number of transfer center locations were considered including the SMART station at Ignacio (southern Novato), the Pacheco Plaza shopping center at Entrada Drive and/or the Caltrans Park and Ride Facility at Rowland Boulevard. The plan currently supports a southern Novato facility, in the vicinity of the proposed SMART station. Co-locating the bus transfer hub and the SMART station offers the added advantage of a multi-modal connection and proximity to the developing Hamilton area. The bus facility could be built quickly, ahead of SMART implementation and is not dependant on SMART operation at that location.

The recommended southern Novato location under consideration will cost approximately \$6 million for a five-berth station with simple shelters and basic amenities, including land acquisition. The basic transfer center could be upgraded over time as part of the bus stop facility plan, but would be of very high utility from the beginning of service. Such a facility could be designed and constructed quickly, probably within 2-years, if the required funding was available. The Transportation Authority of Marin has recently approved its 2006 STIP program, which includes a portion of the funding required for the Novato Transit Center. MCTD will work with TAM to optimize the timing and availability of STIP funds for the project.

Marin City Transfer Facility

After the San Rafael Transit Center, the Marin City Transfer Facility is the busiest transfer location in Marin County serving more than 3,000 boardings and alightings per day. The mid-block transfer facility is located in unincorporated southern Marin County along the back side of the Gateway Shopping Center on Donahue Street.

The facility is in particular need for upgrades to improve passenger safety, passenger comfort, and fix roadway and sidewalk damage. Passengers continually report safety concerns regarding this location and very little passenger information is located at this heavily used transfer location. No shelter is located near the southbound bus boarding area and the northbound bus shelter does not protect passengers adequately from wind and rain.

MCTD is working with the County of Marin and the managers of the Gateway Shopping Center to address the immediate needs at this location and improve transit center amenities. Grant money through the Transportation Enhancement program is anticipated to help facilitate improvements. Marin County will be the applicant for these funds.

Bus Stop Improvements

MCTD has previously had no responsibility for bus stops. In the future, MCTD will need to partner with local communities to ensure that bus stops meet accessibility standards and offer a level of amenities appropriate for the amount of use the stop receives. Since MCTD does not have physical jurisdiction over the stops, coordination with cities, the county, and Caltrans will be required to make any improvements. Both the City of Novato and the City of San Rafael have existing shelter programs with Viacom, an

advertising company that installs and maintains bus shelters in exchange for shared revenues from advertisements. If this type of program is not feasible or desirable in other locations, more operating money will be required to install and maintain improvements. MCTD will need to negotiate agreements with the local jurisdictions to locate and improve bus stops.

Conditions at local stops in the MCTD system range from basic to substandard. A concentrated program of bus stop improvements is necessary to bring MCTD's stops up to standard. More than any other improvement in the system, improving information and conditions

at bus stops will send a positive message to customers, encourage new riders to try the system, and will demonstrate the impact of local sales tax dollars on the system.

Not all stops need to be treated equally. Highest priority for bus stop improvements include those stops that do not meet current ADA accessibility standards, and stops with more than 100 users per day. Improvements at other stops should be prioritized by level of usage.

Figure 6-1 Minimum Bus Stop Amenity

Standards

	Transit Center	Pad Stop	High Use Stop (>100/day)	Medium Use Stop (> 50/day)	Low Use Stop (<50/day)
ADA Accessibility*	Meets all requirements	Meets all requirements	Meets all requirements	Meets all requirements	Signed if not accessible (rare condition)
Signage	All Stops	All Stops	All Stops	All Stops	All Stops
Information	Kiosk, with real time information if possible, displays of system map, route and schedule information. Identify transfer locations	Real time information if possible, displays of system map, route and schedule information. Identify transfer locations	Real time information if possible, displays of system map, route and schedule information. Identify transfer locations	Route map and schedule information	Route map and schedule where possible.
Shelters	Shelters at all boarding locations	Shelters at all boarding locations	Shelters where physically feasible	Shelters optional	
Benches	Benches throughout facility convenient to all boarding areas.	Benches inside shelters and all boarding locations	Benches at all stops where physically feasible	Benches at all stops where physically feasible	
Other amenities	Night Lighting Trash receptacles Public phones Restrooms where possible Bicycle storage	Night Lighting Trash receptacles	Night Lighting Trash receptacles Bicycle storage		

* ADA Accessibility improvement priorities may be addressed in a transition plan

In addition, not all stops require the same level of amenities. The following table shows the level of amenities that should be expected at each bus stop based on the use of that stop. Transit centers require the highest level of amenity, while infrequently used stops require a much lower level of amenity.

As the highest usage stops, the transit centers are a high priority for stop improvements. Marin City is in particular need of upgrades, especially as it is unlikely that it will be replaced by an improved southern transit center in the short to mid-term. Issues to address include the poor condition of the pavement in the bus loading area, the lack of good shelter for waiting passengers, and a lack of passenger information.

The following sections describe the proposed bus stop standards in detail. Detailed ADA accessibility requirements will be included in the bus stop inventory completed for this plan, and will be the subject of a system-wide transition plan.

Sign and Sign Post

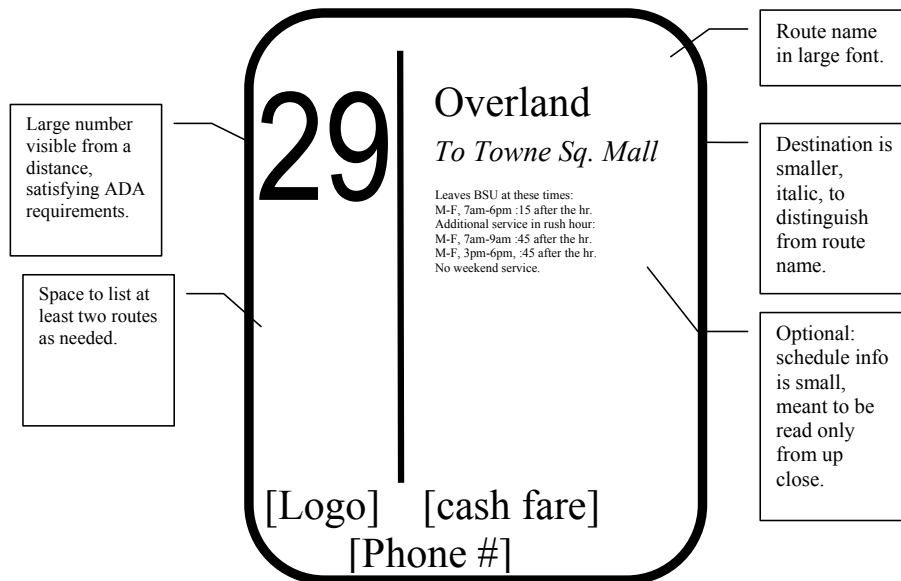
Route signs at bus stops are an important element of good transit service. Bus stop signs allow a transit agency to provide riders with

basic information about the system and are excellent marketing tools to promote transit use and attract new riders.

Bus stop signs should be placed at the location where riders will board the front door of the bus. The sign also assists the operator in positioning the vehicle at the stop. Sign placement should be consistent with current ADA requirements.

The information that should be included on the sign, in declining order of priority, and declining order of prominence if present, comprise of the following:

1. Route number.
2. Route name.
3. Destination (distinguished from route name, less prominent, identical to that used on overhead signs).
4. 511 information phone number (although a good sign, like a good brochure, will reduce the need for these calls).
5. Span information (when it operates, e.g., 7am – 7pm).
6. Schedule (“Service at :32 past the hour.”). Combined with the span information, this is all you need to know to determine whether a bus is coming. Some systems have tried to provide schedule informa-



tion that is specific to each stop, but this detail becomes too hard to update accurately. We recommend providing the time that the bus leaves the beginning of the route, along with that location (e.g. “Departs San Rafael Transit Center at :45 past the hour.”) This information is sufficient to give some sense of when the bus might be expected at this stop, and it is far less complex to produce and update, since there are only two standard schedule decals for each route, one for each direction.

7. Fare. (A sticker on the back of the sign, or even the sign pole, is often sufficient for this purpose.) Only the cash fares need to be displayed here. This completes the information needed to permit spontaneous use.

We recommend making every effort to provide all of the above information in an uncluttered way. Good signage means faster transit service, because it reduces the time drivers spend answering questions as passengers board.

Any good bus stop sign needs to be:

1. Simple and clear (not cluttered with unrelated information, such as promotional material).
2. Consistent with ADA requirements. Industry practice is to put route numbers in very large typefaces, in the range of 1-2 inches high and route names in a large typeface, at least 1/2 inch high and preferably larger. Relatively tall and thin typefaces are often preferred to maximize the number of characters that can be shown.
3. Updateable without replacing the sign. For example, the Six Year Plan, if implemented, should not require replacing signs that are less than five years old. Any procurement of signs must include a cost-effective way to procure decals for revisions, including a means to protect such decals from weather and vandalism. An initial procurement may require a



Examples of pole signs.

contractor to print the route information on each sign, but MCTD must retain the ability to print decals, or provide an exact layout for a printer’s use. Decals used in updating a sign must match the sign’s look exactly, including font and background.

Estimated cost:

Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Sign and post (with 2 decals)	\$300	\$500	\$800

Route Information

System information, schedules and maps can be displayed at bus stops by mounting an information holder to the signpost or on the side panel of a shelter. By displaying route information at the bus stop, the transit agency is making it much easier for regular customers to understand the system and for new riders to learn the routes. Route information encourages riders to plan trips on their own while waiting for a bus instead of depending on customer service to provide route information.

Some recommendations for information displays are as follows:

- Provide updated information when changes are made to route and schedules
- Consider the quality and appearance of information displays
- Make information displays permanent
- Follow ADA clearance, mobility, and visual guidelines

One drawback to route information signs is the regular maintenance required to keep all of the information current throughout the system.

Estimated cost:

Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Information Holder	\$1,500	\$500	\$2,000

Benches

A bench at a bus stop provides patrons with comfort and convenience. Benches are usually installed at a bus stop based on the number of boardings and alightings. Additional benches may be installed where there is a sponsor for both bench installation AND maintenance. Bus stop benches also help identify the stop and add to the urban landscape. In most cases, benches are the first amenity to add to a bus stop as they tend to cost less than shelters and still provide added comfort for patrons.

Important factors in determining bench locations:

- The width of the bus stop location
- Stops where transit agency can maintain general ADA mobility clearances
- Locations where transit riders frequently sit on nearby structures and/or curbs
- Bus stops with a high number of disabled and elderly riders
- Ridership

Estimated cost:

Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Bench	\$1,000	\$250	\$1,250

Shelters

Bus stop shelters provide protection from the outside elements and inclement weather. In most cases, shelters are accompanied by benches, which provide additional comfort for transit patrons. Given the range of bus stop locations on the MCTD system, not all high use stops may accommodate a shelter.

In addition to stops with high ridership, other factors should be considered when selecting locations for shelters, such as proximity to senior housing, location of major activity centers, surrounding land use, and number of routes serving a bus stop. It is also important to consider the right-of-way width to avoid restricting pedestrian and wheelchair traffic.

Shelters come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes and materials. The most critical considerations in shelter design are:

- All accessibility requirements are maintained.
- The shelter provide adequate wind and rain break
- The shelter is “see through” with visibility into the shelter from all sides. This



requires the use of glass or Plexiglas in most shelters.

- The shelter is relatively easy to maintain
- The shelter fits into the overall urban environment and meets local design standards.

Estimated cost:

Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Shelter	\$5,000	\$1000	\$6,000

Trash Receptacle

Trash receptacles can help maintain the overall appearance and cleanliness of a bus stop. Not all bus stops will require a trash receptacle. Bus stops with high ridership should be considered a priority. Problems can arise when the receptacles are not regularly maintained or when the bus stop is next to a land use that generates a lot of trash. As with all passenger amenities, the installation and placement of trash receptacles should follow the ADA clearance requirements.

Estimated cost:

Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Trash Can	\$200	N/A	\$200

Lighting

Lighting plays an important role in the patron's perception of safety and security at a bus stop. A well-lit bus stop provides comfort to passengers waiting for a bus after dark. A cost effective approach to providing indirect light at a site is to locate the bus stop near existing streetlights. In some cases, lighting may have to be provided by the transit agency, which can be restricted by the cost and availability of power in the area.

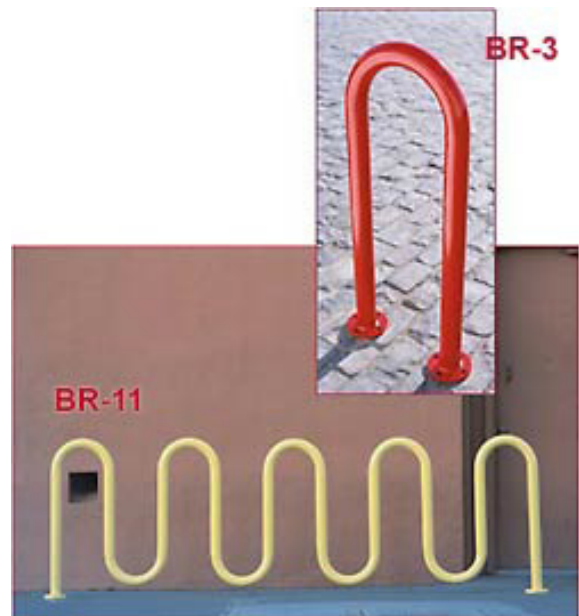
Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Lighting	N/A		

Bicycle Storage

Bicycle storage can range from simple "U style" bicycle locking facilities to bicycle lockers and attended bike stations. Secure bicycle storage should be offered at high volume stops and at locations where commute or recreational cyclists are likely to store bikes. Funding for bike storage may be available as part of the Non-Motorized Pilot Program or Safe Pathway to Transit Funding as well as conventional transit capital sources. Capital costs vary widely depending on the type of securement and installation requirements. Simple "U loops" can be installed for about \$1500.

Product	Cost	Installation	Total
Bicycle Storage	\$500	\$1000	\$1,500

Note: Costs vary depending on product and installation location.



Estimating Bus Stop Improvement Costs

The cost of implementing bus stop improvements is difficult to estimate, because the total costs are largely dependant on the level of accessibility improvements needed at each stop combined with the level of amenity improvements provided. Virtually all of the 600+ bus stops in the system will require at least some improvements. At a minimum, accessible signs and schedule information should be provided at every stop in conjunction with implementation of the service plan.

Assuming an average of \$7,500 per bus stop for capital improvements, the total cost of the bus stop improvement program will be approximately \$5 M, which can be spread over several years. Unlike the other projects included in the capital plan, bus stop improvements are difficult to support with existing grant sources, and may become a primary candidate for Measure A funding.

Accessible Taxi Vehicles

The availability of an accessible taxi fleet is an important goal in Marin County, regardless of the type of subsidized program implemented.

A total of four accessible vehicles are envisioned in the short term, with additional accessible taxis purchased as needed. These vehicles could be owned by MCTD or by Marin County as needed to ensure that the vehicles are fully insured. Vehicles could be leased to taxi companies who would agree to prioritize accessible vehicles for wheelchair calls and to accept taxi scrip as cash on all trips on all vehicles.

Should this pilot program be discontinued for any reason, the vehicles will revert to the paratransit fleet to expand traditional paratransit

service.

An accessible taxi is estimated to cost \$40,000 for a total of \$160,000 for four vehicles. Funding for these expansion vehicles may be available through property tax receipts or other sources. The federal transportation reauthorization bill may also provide an opportunity for funding accessible taxis under the New Freedom program.

Funding Sources

Most transit operators rely on a variety of sources of funds to pay for capital projects. In the Bay Area, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission is responsible for programming federal transit funds for capital, and the Congestion Management Agencies (TAM in Marin County) are responsible for programming certain federal flexible funds and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds and other local funds. The recent passage of SAFETEA-LU, the federal reauthorization of the transportation bill, provides new opportunities to MCTD for funding both capital and operating elements of the planned service. A summary of the funds that could be available to MCTD for the Capital Improvement Program is provided below.

Federal Funds

On August 10, 2005, the President signed the surface transportation reauthorization bill, entitled the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) into law. This legislation increased funding for transportation by 46% over the previous surface transportation bill, TEA-21. The bill continues programs that MCTD has participated in such as the Section 5311 formula program for other than urbanized

areas, and programs that MCTD could be eligible to participate in such as the Section 5307 urbanized area formula grants program. New programs such as the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands and the New Freedom Program will provide opportunities for new federal funding for MCTD.

Many of the provisions of SAFETEA-LU will require rulemaking activities to define and implement the changes. Until further rulemaking and guidance is available, it is uncertain how funds might flow to MCTD under these programs. MCTD will continue to work with MTC to determine what sources could be used for its capital program and how those funds can be accessed. Under certain of these programs, MCTD will need to become a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grantee or establish a relationship with an existing grantee, such as Golden Gate Transit.

Section 5307- Urbanized Area Formula Grants

These funds are provided to Urbanized Areas and are managed through MTC’s Transit Capital Priorities process. The Transit Capital Priorities process includes a scoring system whereby different types of projects are assigned a score. The categories included in the process and the scores for each category are shown in Figure 6-2. Due to the limited amount of formula funds available in any particular year, only Score 16 projects have been funded. Even with more funds being made available under SAFETEA-LU with the addition of new formula features, it is unclear that projects scoring less than a score 16 will be funded. In the FY06-08 Transit Capital Priorities process, MTC will allow transit operators to use 10% of their total formula share for any lower scoring projects they choose.

Figure 6-2 MTC Transit Capital Priorities Scoring of Projects

Score	Category
16	Revenue Vehicle Replacement/Rehabilitation
16	Fixed Guideway Replacement/Rehabilitation
16	Ferry Replacement/Rehabilitation
16	TransLink
15	Safety
14	ADA/Non-vehicle Access Improvements
13	Fixed/Heavy Equipment, Maintenance/Operating Facilities
12	Intermodal Stations
12	Station/Parking Rehabilitation
11	Service Vehicles
10	Tools and Equipment
9	Office Equipment
9	Capitalized Maintenance, including Tires/Tubes/Engines/Transmissions
8	Operational Improvement/Enhancements
8	Expansion

In the past, Golden Gate Transit has received funding for transit capital projects through this process, replacing buses used in MCTD local transit service. These federal funds are matched at a rate of 80% federal and 20% local match. MCTD would be in a good position to continue to benefit from Section 5307 funds for bus replacement by continuing to participate in the replacement of buses used for local transit service through Golden Gate Transit, even if large buses are being replaced by smaller ones. Should MCTD become a direct federal recipient, it is not clear how MCTD’s vehicle replacements would be scored, since MCTD does not currently own the vehicles it would be replacing. Vehicles required for expanded service, or vehicles that do not replace other vehicles would likely not be in a score 16 category.

Section 5308 – Clean Fuels Grant Program

This program provides discretionary capital grants for clean fuel buses and related facilities in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas. These funds are matched at a rate of 80% federal and 20% local match.

Although a significant number of bus and facilities projects are designated (earmarked) in SAFETEA-LU, MCTD's clean fuel bus purchases would be eligible for funding. With legislative advocacy for MCTD's clean fuel bus program, these discretionary funds may be authorized and appropriated during this SRTP period. MCTD's chances for getting these discretionary funds are enhanced if their proposal represents a combined strategy with Golden Gate Transit and if the two operators are seen as supporting one another.

Section 5307-09 – Excess Capital Funds

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has identified one-time excess federal funds from these two federal funding programs that can be used for one-time capitol projects. MCTD and Golden Gate Transit are currently reviewing the timing and opportunity of this funding.

Funds are allocated by formula that considers the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each state. In California, Caltrans administers the Section 5310 program. Local non-profit agencies are eligible recipients. Capital projects are eligible for funding at an 80% federal and 20% local match.

Section 5310 – Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

Funds are allocated by formula that considers the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each state. In California, Caltrans administers the Section 5310 program.

Local non-profit agencies are eligible recipients. Capital projects are eligible for funding at an 80% federal and 20% local match.

Whistlestop Wheels has funded about one half of its paratransit vehicle fleet with Section 5310 funds. The Marin Community Foundation has provided the local match for these grants. Section 5310 will continue to be a good source of funds for paratransit vehicles.

Section 5311 – Other Than Urbanized Area Formula Program

This program provides capital and operating grants to States for services in other-than-urbanized areas. Under SAFETEA-LU, program amounts have increased and the formula for providing funds to States has changed. It is likely that the amount of Section 5311 funding to California will increase during the reauthorization period. The share for capital projects is 80% federal. For operating projects, the share is 50% federal.

The rural service plan has indicated a need for four new higher capacity buses for the rural service plan implementation. These buses should be funded 80% with 5311 funds if available.

Section 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

This program provides funding for local programs that offer job access and reverse commute services to provide transportation for low income individuals who live in the city core and work in suburban locations. Under SAFETEA-LU this is a formula program, not a discretionary grant program as it had been under TEA-21. States and designated recipients must select grantees competitively.

While JARC funds are more likely to be a source of needed operating funds, rather than being used for capital, expanded services in the Canal

and Marin City areas will require additional buses that could be candidates for JARC funds. In particular, the new direct service from the Canal to Mill Valley could qualify for JARC funds.

Section 5317 – New Freedom Program

This is a new program with the purpose of encouraging services and facility improvements that go beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Funds are available for capital and operating costs and are allocated to designated recipients and States through a formula based on population of persons with disabilities. Projects must be included in a locally-developed human service transportation coordinated plan beginning in FY 2007.

Expansions of paratransit service to non-mandated populations including subsidized taxi and local initiative shuttle services aimed at older adults and persons with disabilities may be candidate projects for New Freedom program funds. The specific requirements for this program have not been drafted at this time, but are likely to include both capital and operating funding opportunities.

Section 5320 – Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

The new Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands program provides grants for planning or capital projects in or in the vicinity of any federally owned or managed park, refuge, or recreation area that is open to the general public. Approximately \$22 million to \$27 million is available annually nationwide beginning in FY 2006.

The Muir Woods shuttle service is a possible candidate for planning and capital funds from this new program. The pilot program has been run with very old vehicles that Golden Gate

Transit had available for service, which would require replacement to continue the pilot program.

Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program Funds

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides funds for use on a wide variety of highway, public transit capital, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transportation control measures, surface transportation planning activities, and safety. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program provides funding for new or expanded transportation projects, programs, and operations that help reduce emissions. SAFETEA-LU increased STP funds by 17.2% and CMAQ funds by 27.2% over the amounts authorized in TEA-21.

Although MTC has recently completed programming STP and CMAQ funds through FY 2008-09, future programming may be available for transit capital shortfalls, Transportation for Livable Communities, and regional bicycle and pedestrian projects. MCTD should work closely with TAM in developing the Congestion Management Plan, and Golden Gate Transit as the regional operator to ensure that transit projects have maximum opportunity for funding under this program.

Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program

This program introduces a network of non-motorized transportation infrastructure facilities, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian and bicycle trails that connect directly with transit stations, schools, residences, businesses, recreation areas, and other community activity centers. The purpose of the program is to demonstrate the extent to which bicycling and walking can carry a significant part of the

transportation load, and represent a major portion of the transportation solution.

Marin County was selected as one of four communities in the U.S. to receive \$25 million for the non-motorized transportation pilot program. Up to \$6.25 million may be allocated annually over the four year period from FY 2006 through FY 2009. This program may supplement funding required for bus stop improvements and transit centers identified in the SRTP, or replace funding that is not yet secured for these projects. As the non-motorized transportation pilot program is still under development, no specific funds are included in the capital funding plan.

State Funds

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The primary source of state funds for transit capital improvements is the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The Transportation Authority of Marin programs a portion of these funds. Due to the state budget shortfalls over the past three years, State funding programmed through the STIP has been minimal, and the preliminary fund estimate for FY 2006 provided little funding for transportation statewide. Generally, the STIP is a rolling five-year program that is updated every two years, adding two new years to the end of the period. Thus, the 2006 STIP adds new programming for 2010 and 2011. TAM has included a portion of the funding for the Novato Transit Center project in the 2006 Marin County STIP priorities. Although the project is identified for funding in FY 2010-11, funds may be advanced to an earlier year. Most STIP dollars for transit have been “federalized” because the state allocates federal Surface Transportation Program formula

funds to transit projects and preserves state funds for highway projects.

State Transit Assistance Funds – Regional Paratransit

State Transit Assistance Funds are allocated to MTC under a formula for “revenue” share that is based on transit operators’ relative share of revenue received and for a population share based on the relative population of the area. The population share is distributed by MTC under various programs. One of those programs is the Regional Paratransit program, which has been tapped in Marin County to match federal Section 5310 grants for Whistlestop Wheels paratransit vehicle purchases. This source can be used for operating or capital purposes and does not require a match.

Local Funds

Annually 6% of Measure A funds, about \$900,000 per year, is provided for investments in bus transit facilities for a clean and efficient transit system. While this amount will not address all of MCTD’s capital needs, it can be used as local match for federal or state funds described above, on projects that are appropriate for Measure A funding.

Measure A allows for debt financing of up to \$5 million for transit capital projects, to accelerate important investments in the local transit system. MCTD will make an initial request to TAM for these capital funds as a part of the SRTP/CIP process. Receiving bond proceeds from TAM will not have a near term impact on the allocation of transit funds available to MCTD from the net proceeds of the tax over the next ten years, because bond repayment is made “off the top” rather than from individual strategies. Future year annual allocations of

Measure A capital funds to MCTD can be used to pay the principal amount (up to \$5.0 million) financed by TAM.

Both the annual allocations of Measure A and the debt financed component of Measure A funding could be used for the projects identified in the capital plan. In particular, bus stop improvements and the Novato Transit Center are projects that can be implemented quickly and with maximum visibility to the public.

The use of Measure A bond proceeds would help accelerate projects such as the bus stop improvements and the Novato Transit Center. However, if Measure A bond proceeds are not available, other funds will be sought. Alternatively, these projects could be deferred, and annual Measure A revenues could be “saved” until such time as the projects are fully funded.

Funding the Capital Plan

Measure A provides a dedicated funding stream for capital projects on the local transit system. However, the funds provided by Measure A alone will not be adequate to address the system’s capital needs. It is imperative that MCTD make the best possible use of all available capital grants described above.

The capital budget for the system includes a number of assumptions about capital grants:

- MCTD will continue to receive 80% funding for paratransit vehicles and 20% match funding through the Marin Community Foundation.
- All other vehicles, except accessible taxis, will receive at least 50% outside funding. MCTD will either purchase vehicles directly or will pay Golden Gate Transit a proportional share of the local match for vehicles used for local service. Should MCTD purchase its vehicles through Golden Gate, it will have input into the

type of vehicles purchased and the specifications for those vehicles.

- MCTD and local partners will share the costs of upgrading all bus stops, which serve both the local and regional bus systems. At least 30% of the cost of bus stop improvements will come from non-Measure A sources, yet to be determined.
- At least 50%, and up to 80%, of the Novato Transit Center costs will come from capital grants yet to be determined.

Capital Funding Plan Summary

The high priority capital needs of the transit system over the next ten years will rely heavily on Measure A and existing sources available to Golden Gate Transit and MCTD for funding. However, SAFETEA-LU, the newly authorized federal transit bill, provides new opportunities that are included in the funding plan. Costs for capital expenditures were estimated in FY 2006 dollars and then escalated by 3% annually to the year of expenditure. The capital plan, summarized in Figure 6-3, does not assign a specific funding source to an individual project, but applies the full range of potential funding sources to a broad set of funding priorities to create a balanced plan. Each source has limitations, and as new information becomes available about discretionary sources, individual projects may be accelerated or pushed back in time.

This plan will require MCTD to aggressively pursue new funding available through SAFETEA-LU and other funding to address the system’s capital needs. Measure A capital funding requests will be applied to appropriate projects as matching funds.

Figure 6-3 Capital Funding Plan Summary

EXPENDITURES	Ten Year Total	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Paratransit Vehicle Replacement	4,765,530	0	668,367	619,576	0	1,095,514	0	0	798,065	822,007	762,001
Paratransit Vehicle Expansion	374,260	0	0	0	141,814	0	0	232,446	0	0	0
Small Buses for Rural Transit	1,311,272			1,311,272							
Small Fixed Route Buses	3,751,518				1,406,886	1,449,093	895,539				
Standard & Articulated Bus Replacement	2,300,000		460,000	460,000	460,000	460,000	460,000				
Fixed Route Systemwide Contribution	2,158,660		431,732	431,732	431,732	431,732	431,732				
Novato Transfer Center	6,000,000	0	3,000,000	3,000,000	0						
Marin City Transit Center Improvements			160,625								
Systemwide Bus Stop Improvements	5,888,458			546,364	1,125,509	1,159,274	1,194,052	1,229,874	633,385		
Accessible Tax	172,290		84,872	87,418							
Total Expenditures	26,721,988	0	4,644,971	6,456,362	3,565,941	4,595,613	2,981,324	1,462,320	1,431,450	822,007	762,001
REVENUES											
Federal											
Section 5307	3,001,214				1,125,509	1,159,274	716,431				
Section 5310	3,812,424		534,694	495,661		876,411			638,452	657,606	609,600
Section 5311	655,636			655,636							
Section 5308, 5316, 5317, 5320	299,408				113,451			185,957			
Federal Transportation Enhancements Program ¹			128,500								
State											
STIP	3,000,000		1,500,000	1,500,000							
STAF - Regional Paratransit	74,852				28,363			46,489			
Local											
Measure A	13,158,810		2,476,604	3,517,241	1,960,965	1,993,042	1,906,676	860,912	443,370		
Marin Community Foundation	953,106		133,673	123,915		219,103			159,613	164,401	152,400
Other Local (TBD)	1,766,537		32,125	163,909	337,653	347,782	358,216	368,962	190,016		
Total Revenues	26,721,988	0	4,644,971	6,456,362	3,565,941	4,595,613	2,981,324	1,462,320	1,431,450	822,007	762,001
ANNUAL BALANCE (Surplus/Deficit)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹ Marin County will apply for federal funds,

CHAPTER 7 FINANCIAL PLAN

The cost of providing transit service is dependent on two factors:

- The cost per unit of service, usually cost per hour.
- The number of units or hours of service provided.

The service plan presented in this plan is designed to maximize ridership while retaining coverage to as much of the County as possible. It does not allow for dramatic growth, but does reallocate existing resources in a more efficient and effective way, and also allows for small increases in service as funding becomes available. Assuming the service plan is implemented in the Fall of 2006, the proposed service will be financially sustainable over the life of the new agreement with Golden Gate Transit. Near the end of the upcoming five year agreement, in 2010-11, additional revenue will be needed to continue the services available in the plan. Alternatively, services could be reduced at that time, or the cost for each hour of service could be reduced by a new contract agreement.

It is not uncommon for Short Range Plans to include deficits in the out years of the plan that must be made up with new funding sources. Because the plan is revisited every two years, MCTD will have an opportunity to make service adjustments in advance of any revenue shortfall and will have an opportunity to assess the accuracy of assumptions over time.

Hourly Costs for Service

To achieve a sustainable service plan, assumptions must be made about the cost for each hour of service purchased, for each type of service provided. Because service implementation will occur after new contracts are negotiated for rural and paratransit services, the hourly rates included in this financial plan can represent only an estimate based on recent cost proposals received by other operators in the Bay Area, and on current costs from MCTD's operators. Hourly rates for urban fixed route service are based on the recently negotiated contract with Golden Gate Transit, using a blended hourly rate for services to be provided with different vehicle types.

Rural Service Costs

MCTD will be going out to bid for a rural service provider, as required by the Federal Transit Administration. Current cost per hour for rural service provided by Whistlestop Wheels is approximately \$53, excluding administration costs. The service plan estimates costs increasing to \$61 per hour, to account for the operation of larger vehicles and redesigned service. This hourly cost is expected to increase by 3% per year over the period of the plan.

Fixed Route Service Costs

The existing agreement between MCTD and Golden Gate Transit, which will terminate on April 30, 2006 charges MCTD \$116 per hour for every hour of service it provides. The new agreement, which will be in effect beginning May 1, 2006 reduces the cost per hour to \$110.69,

and requires a capital contribution for the buses and facilities required to operate local service. The capital requirement was discussed in Chapter 6. This chapter presents a financial plan for the operation of the local system, based on the newly negotiated base rate of \$110.69 per hour escalated by 5% per year.

The proposed base rate of \$110.69 per hour is a “blended” rate, assuming a mix of standard 40’, small bus and articulated bus routes, each operating at what are assumed to be different rates. The blended rate will be charged for the first 122,000 service hours purchased by MCTD. Additional service hours will be based on the type of bus actually used on the route, and whether the bus operates during the commute peaks (roughly 6-9AM and 3-6PM).

Local Initiative Service Costs

Local Initiative service, as described in Chapter 3 is expected to be new service operated in partnership between MCTD and a local jurisdiction or partner. This service, designed to be operated in very small 13 to 15 passenger vehicles, would be provided by shuttle operators such as MV Transportation, Marin Airporter, Whistlestop Wheels, or other companies with experience in very small bus operation.

For purposes of estimation, the hourly rate of \$40 is based on the newly negotiated rate between the County’s Health and Human Services Department and MV Transportation for the County Connection service. The annual set aside for Local Initiatives funding will vary depending on the amount of revenue available in a given year.

Local initiative service is planned as a pilot service. MCTD plans to help fund these services for a limited amount of time, giving them the opportunity to merit becoming a regular MCTD fixed route or, if they do not meet MCTD’s productivity standards for the community, to find the additional local funding necessary to operate the service.

Paratransit Service Costs

The current contract with Whistlestop Wheels will end at the end of the current fiscal year, on June 30, 2006. MCTD intends to go out to bid in preparation for a new contract that would begin on July 1, 2006. The rate assumed in the financial plan of \$30.65 per hour (excluding administrative costs) is based on the current paratransit service rate, escalated at 5% annually, consistent with past increases.

Revenue Sources

The primary revenue sources for MCTD’s operations are:

- Transportation Development Act Funds (TDA)
- State Transit Assistance Funds (STA)
- Measure A Sales Tax Operating Funds
- Fares
- Property Taxes (used primarily for paratransit)
- Section 5311 Rural Transit Funds (used for West Marin Stagecoach Service)

Each of these sources is described below. In addition, MCTD may pursue other funds, including demonstration funding from the Air District, local initiative partnership funding, and Lifeline Transportation funds. These discretionary funding potentials are also described in the following sections.

Transportation Development Act Funds

Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds are provided to counties based on a statewide one-quarter percent sales tax. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission provides annual estimates of TDA funds for Bay Area counties. Under the current agreement with Golden Gate Transit, MCTD and Golden Gate Transit share TDA funds to Marin County based on the relative number of passengers and revenue hours provided by each operator. In FY 2006-07, that share is expected to be approximately 36% assuming Golden Gate Transit service levels remain constant. TDA funds are conservatively estimated to grow by 2% annually over the SRTP period.

State Transit Assistance Funds

State Transit Assistance (STA) funds are provided to transit operators based on a population share and on a revenue share. The population share is administered by MTC and is made available to Marin County for fixed route and paratransit services. The revenue share is provided directly to transit operators based on a proportion of each operator's share of revenue generated statewide. MCTD receives STA funds directly from MTC for paratransit service, and indirectly through its agreement with Golden Gate Transit for local fixed route service, based on the relative number of passengers and revenue hours provided by each operator. In FY 2006-07, that share is expected to be approximately 36% assuming Golden Gate Transit service levels remain constant.

Measure A Sales Tax Operating Funds

Marin County's half cent sales tax for transportation, Measure A, provides a share of sales tax revenue to local fixed route transit operations (37%), rural transit operations (3%), and paratransit and special needs services (9%). The Transportation Authority of Marin administers the sales tax expenditure plan and provides sales tax forecasts. The current forecast of sales tax revenues is very conservative, with no real or inflationary growth projected. The forecast will be updated with actual sales tax collections and new sales tax projections every two years through TAM's Strategic Plan. The SRTP uses the TAM sales tax estimates in the financial plan. While the SRTP is based on assumed levels of Measure A revenues for each service type, specific expenditures will be identified for Measure A use and eligibility to TAM for annual funding agreements.

Property Taxes

A share of property taxes in Marin County is provided to MCTD. This source of revenue has been used historically for paratransit service and is planned for continued use on paratransit and special needs service in the future. Property tax revenue is projected to grow by 6.5% per year, based on forecasts provided by the County Auditor/Tax Collector.

Section 5311 Other Than Urbanized Area Formula Program

The Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 Other Than Urbanized Area Formula program is administered by Caltrans through MTC's annual Call for Projects process. Up to 50% of the operating cost less fare revenue

is eligible for funding from the Section 5311 program. Under SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation bill, the amount of Section 5311 funding will increase. While funding is made through an annual process at the discretion of MTC, it is assumed that the current Section 5311 funding will be maintained and that increases in rural transit service will be funded at the allowable federal rate for the next ten years. The amount of Section 5311 funding is reasonable given the increases included in SAFETEA-LU.

Lifeline Funds

MTC has combined several small funding programs into a Lifeline Transportation fund which is designed to better meet the transportation needs of low income communities throughout the Bay Area. In Marin County, portions of San Rafael and Marin City are eligible for Lifeline funds. Three years of Lifeline funds will be awarded in the current fiscal year, with expenditures beginning in FY 2006-07. Eligible expenses include local programs that offer job access and reverse commute services to suburban locations. These funds can also be used for extending service hours or days of service and may be used for transportation purposes other than fixed route transit. Under SAFETEA-LU this is a formula program, not a discretionary grant program as it had been under TEA-21. Designated recipients must select grantees competitively.

Section 5317 – New Freedom Program

This is a new program with the purpose of encouraging services and facility improvements that go beyond those required by the Americans

with Disabilities Act. Funds are available for capital and operating costs and are allocated to designated recipients and States through a formula based on population of persons with disabilities. Projects must be included in a locally-developed human service transportation coordinated plan beginning in FY 2007. A share of paratransit service costs would be eligible for this new fund source.

Section 5320 – Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands

The new Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands program provides grants for planning or capital projects in or in the vicinity of any federally owned or managed park, refuge, or recreation area that is open to the general public. Approximately \$22 million to \$27 million is available annually nationwide beginning in FY 2006.

The Muir Woods shuttle service and other planned services to or through the Golden Gate National Recreation Area are possible candidates for planning and capital funds from this new program.

Other Potential New Sources

Under current forecasts of existing fund sources, there is adequate financial capacity to fully fund the service planned in Marin County only through FY 2010-2011, with deficits beginning to appear in FY 2011-12. Service can be maintained at current levels and at projected costs only with additional funding, which may be available through SAFETEA-LU or a new state, local or private source. Alternatively, revenues may increase if tax revenues grow faster than

projected, or if additional funding becomes available to transit after the Highway 101 HOV lane is completed. New or other sources of funds beyond the current forecasts were included in the financial plan to eliminate shortfalls in FY 2011-12 through FY 2014-15.

While these new funding sources are speculative, MCTD may alternatively elect to bid local services if a lower cost contractor can be found for local small bus service beginning in 2010-11 when the new agreement with Golden Gate Transit expires. MCTD may also consider reducing or changing local service in the out years of this plan as a last resort if revenues and costs can not be kept in line. Specifically, a new source of funds such as partnering with private entities, or a new local or state initiative is required beginning in FY 2009-10 to fully fund the planned service. Alternatively, costs for fixed route service might be restructured through a new contract after FY 2010-11 to balance expenditures and revenues through the SRTP period.

Figure 7-1 provides a high level summary of the 10-year financial outlook for MCTD based on the revenue assumptions described above and the service plan included in this SRTP. Additional detail including the amount of sales tax assumed available for each service mode is shown in Figures 7-2 through 7-4.

Figure 7-1 10-Year Financial Projection

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
LOCAL FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT SERVICE										
Planned Service Hours	93,377	128,144	129,425	129,425	129,425	129,425	129,425	129,425	129,425	129,425
Hourly Cost ^{1,2}	\$114.84	\$110.69	\$116.22	\$122.04	\$128.14	\$134.54	\$141.27	\$148.34	\$155.75	\$163.54
Total Fixed Route Operating Expenses	\$10,870,548	\$14,615,856	\$15,175,187	\$15,867,465	\$16,618,393	\$17,461,703	\$18,918,362	\$19,874,880	\$20,878,289	\$21,930,907
Total Fixed Route Operating Revenue	\$10,870,549	\$14,615,857	\$15,175,186	\$15,867,465	\$16,618,394	\$17,465,438	\$18,925,381	\$19,968,366	\$20,936,782	\$22,031,834
Annual Surplus/Deficit - Reserved	\$0	\$0	\$(0)	\$0	\$0	\$3,735	\$7,019	\$93,486	\$58,493	\$100,927
PARATRANSIT & SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSIT										
Local Paratransit										
Planned Service Hours	45,453	47,726	50,112	52,618	55,249	58,011	60,912	63,957	67,155	70,513
Hourly Cost	\$30.65	\$32.18	\$33.79	\$35.48	\$37.26	\$39.12	\$41.07	\$43.13	\$45.28	\$47.55
Intercounty Paratransit										
Planned Service Hours	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958
Hourly Cost	\$35.29	\$36.35	\$37.44	\$38.56	\$39.72	\$40.91	\$42.14	\$43.40	\$44.70	\$46.05
Total Paratransit Operating Expenses	\$4,662,589	\$5,496,510	\$5,539,541	\$5,897,930	\$6,343,722	\$6,893,619	\$7,501,424	\$8,100,441	\$8,850,375	\$9,687,585
Total Paratransit Operating Revenue	\$5,099,552	\$5,497,458	\$5,542,369	\$5,898,457	\$6,343,723	\$6,895,595	\$7,519,651	\$8,113,122	\$8,872,050	\$9,706,132
Annual Surplus/Deficit	\$436,963	\$948	\$2,828	\$527	\$0	\$1,976	\$18,228	\$12,681	\$21,675	\$18,547
RURAL TRANSIT SERVICE										
West Marin Stagecoach										
Planned Service Hours	6,000	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937
Hourly Cost	\$53.07	\$61.00	\$62.83	\$64.71	\$66.66	\$68.66	\$70.72	\$72.84	\$75.02	\$77.27
Route 63										
Planned Service Hours ³	934	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hourly Cost ⁴	\$88.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Rural Transit Operating Expenses	\$488,804	\$708,867	\$716,881	\$753,522	\$791,265	\$830,144	\$870,195	\$911,452	\$953,953	\$997,735
Total Rural Transit Operating Revenue	\$505,032	\$820,348	\$824,966	\$835,560	\$860,558	\$914,764	\$935,717	\$948,016	\$960,675	\$998,705
Annual Surplus/Deficit	\$16,228	\$111,481	\$108,085	\$82,038	\$69,293	\$84,619	\$65,522	\$36,564	\$6,723	\$970
LOCAL INITIATIVES/INCREASED SCHOOL SERVICE⁵										
Local Initiatives Service (Ongoing)	\$-	\$60,000	\$63,000	\$64,890	\$66,837	\$68,842	\$70,907	\$73,034	\$75,225	\$77,482
SYSTEMWIDE SUMMARY, ALL SERVICES										
Total Expenses	\$16,021,942	\$20,881,233	\$21,494,609	\$22,583,807	\$23,820,217	\$25,254,309	\$27,360,888	\$28,959,807	\$30,757,842	\$32,693,709
Total Revenues	\$16,475,133	\$20,933,662	\$21,542,521	\$22,601,481	\$23,822,674	\$25,275,797	\$27,380,750	\$29,029,504	\$30,769,507	\$32,736,672
Annual Surplus/Deficit	\$453,191	\$52,428	\$47,912	\$17,675	\$2,457	\$21,489	\$19,862	\$69,697	\$11,665	\$42,962

Notes:

¹Local Fixed Route hourly rate shown is the blended rate based on a five-year contract with Golden Gate Transit beginning May 1, 2006.

²Local Fixed Route hourly rates will vary by vehicle type beginning in FY 2011-12. The rate shown is a blended rate.

³Route 63 expenses and revenues are budgeted under Local Fixed Route for FY 2005-06 and thereafter.

⁴The hourly cost for Route 63 is assumed to change mid-year in FY 2005-06. The rate shown is an average hourly rate for the year.

⁵Local initiatives consist of expenditures that will be made for new service initiatives based on surplus revenues available.

Figure 7-2 Local Fixed Route Service, FY 2005/06 - FY 2014/15

	FY 2005/06	FY 2006/07	FY 2007/2008	FY 2008/2009	FY 2009/2010	FY 2010/2011	FY 2011/2012	FY 2012/2013	FY 2013/2014	FY 2014/2015
Contract Expenses										
Blended Rate Service										
Base Hours	93,377	123,445	124,679	124,679	124,679	124,679				
Base Rate ¹	\$114.84	\$110.69	\$116.22	\$122.04	\$128.14	\$134.54				
Total, Blended Base	\$10,267,636	\$13,664,127	\$14,490,807	\$15,215,347	\$15,976,114	\$16,774,920				
Standard Bus Service										
Base Hours							39,773	39,773	39,773	39,773
Base Rate							\$146.77	\$154.11	\$161.82	\$169.91
Total, Standard Base							\$5,837,540	\$6,129,417	\$6,435,888	\$6,757,883
Peak Hours							20,697	20,697	20,697	20,697
Peak Rate							\$167.78	\$176.17	\$184.98	\$194.23
Total, Standard Peak							\$3,472,507	\$3,646,132	\$3,828,439	\$4,019,861
Small Bus Service										
Base Hours							27,679	27,679	27,679	27,679
Base Rate							\$110.08	\$115.58	\$121.36	\$127.43
Total, Small Bus Base							\$3,046,867	\$3,199,210	\$3,359,171	\$3,527,129
Peak Hours							18,453	18,453	18,453	18,453
Peak Rate							\$125.84	\$132.13	\$138.74	\$145.68
Total, Small Bus Peak							\$2,322,095	\$2,438,200	\$2,560,110	\$2,688,115
Articulated Bus Service										
Base Hours							10,847	10,847	10,847	10,847
Base Rate							\$183.47	\$192.64	\$202.27	\$212.38
Total, Artic Bus Base							\$1,990,071	\$2,089,574	\$2,194,053	\$2,303,755
Peak Hours							7,231	7,231	7,231	7,231
Peak Rate							\$209.73	\$220.22	\$231.23	\$242.79
Total, Artic Bus Peak							\$1,516,653	\$1,592,486	\$1,672,110	\$1,755,715
Community Contracted Service²										
Hours		4,699	4,746	4,746	4,746	4,746	4,746	4,746	4,746	4,746
Rate		\$61.00	\$62.83	\$64.71	\$66.66	\$68.66	\$70.72	\$72.84	\$75.02	\$77.27
Total, Community Contracted Service		\$286,639	\$298,191	\$307,136	\$316,350	\$325,841	\$335,616	\$345,685	\$356,055	\$366,737
Subtotal, Contract Expense³		\$10,337,636	\$13,950,766	\$15,522,483	\$16,292,465	\$17,100,761	\$18,521,348	\$19,440,704	\$20,405,825	\$21,418,995
MCTD Administration		\$352,632	\$272,850	\$291,941	\$325,929	\$360,942	\$397,014	\$434,176	\$472,464	\$511,912
Loan Repayment		\$180,280	\$392,240	\$53,040	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal, Direct Expenses		\$499,579	\$665,090	\$344,981	\$325,929	\$360,942	\$397,014	\$434,176	\$472,464	\$511,912
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$10,837,215	\$14,615,856	\$15,175,187	\$16,618,393	\$17,461,703	\$18,918,362	\$19,874,880	\$20,878,289	\$21,930,907

Figure 7-2 Local Fixed Route Service, FY 2005/06 - FY 2014/15 (continued)

	FY 2005/06	FY 2006/07	FY 2007/2008	FY 2008/2009	FY 2009/2010	FY 2010/2011	FY 2011/2012	FY 2012/2013	FY 2013/2014	FY 2014/2015
Operating Revenues										
Fixed Route Passenger Fares	\$2,871,835	\$4,267,085	\$4,514,384	\$4,744,327	\$4,985,518	\$5,238,511	\$5,675,509	\$5,962,464	\$6,263,487	\$6,579,272
Transit Development Act (TDA)	\$2,575,344	\$3,740,794	\$3,871,722	\$4,026,591	\$4,207,787	\$4,397,138	\$4,595,009	\$4,801,784	\$5,017,865	\$5,243,668
State Transit Assistance (STA)	\$394,023	\$455,724	\$478,510	\$502,435	\$527,557	\$553,935	\$581,632	\$610,713	\$641,249	\$673,312
Advertising Revenue	\$372,150	\$492,237	\$507,004	\$522,214	\$537,881	\$554,017	\$570,638	\$587,757	\$605,389	\$623,551
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	\$66,367	\$87,783	\$90,416	\$93,129	\$95,923	\$98,800	\$101,764	\$104,817	\$107,962	\$111,201
Property Tax	\$0	\$260,000	\$465,000	\$375,000	\$270,000	\$170,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other/New Revenue		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$130,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000
Measure A Sales Tax Revenue	\$4,590,830	\$5,312,234	\$5,248,150	\$5,603,768	\$5,993,728	\$6,323,037	\$6,300,830	\$6,300,830	\$6,300,830	\$6,300,830
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$11,002,669	\$14,615,857	\$15,175,186	\$15,867,465	\$16,618,394	\$17,465,438	\$18,925,381	\$19,968,366	\$20,936,782	\$22,031,834
Annual Surplus/Deficit	\$165,453	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,735	\$7,019	\$93,486	\$58,493	\$100,927
Farebox Recovery	26.9%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%

Notes:

- ¹ Hourly rate shown is the weighted average rate for the year, based on the existing contract rate of \$116 per hour through April 30, 2006. New hourly rate of \$110.69 is effective May 1, 2006.
- ² Includes one Local Initiative Route.
- ³ Capital contribution of \$70,000 included in FY 2005-06 contract expense.

Figure 7-3 Rural Transit – Stagecoach and Route 63, FY 2005/06 - 2014/15

	FY 2005/06	FY 2006/07	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15
Operating Cost										
Stagecoach										
Hours	6,000	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937	8,937
Hourly Rate	\$53.07	\$61.00	\$62.83	\$64.71	\$66.66	\$68.66	\$70.72	\$72.84	\$75.02	\$77.27
Total, Stagecoach	\$318,418	\$545,157	\$561,512	\$578,357	\$595,708	\$613,579	\$631,986	\$650,946	\$670,474	\$690,589
Route 63										
Hours	934									
Hourly Rate	\$116 & \$53.07									
Total, Route 63	\$82,228									
MCTD Administration	\$79,825	\$163,710	\$155,370	\$175,165	\$195,557	\$216,565	\$238,208	\$260,506	\$283,478	\$307,147
TOTAL OPERATING COST	\$480,471	\$708,867	\$716,881	\$753,522	\$791,265	\$830,144	\$870,195	\$911,452	\$953,953	\$997,735
Operating Revenues										
Passenger Fares	\$33,112	\$40,000	\$41,200	\$42,024	\$42,864	\$43,722	\$44,596	\$45,488	\$46,398	\$47,326
FTA Section 5311	\$172,720	\$334,434	\$337,841	\$347,976	\$358,415	\$369,168	\$380,243	\$391,650	\$403,399	\$415,501
Measure A	\$299,200	\$445,914	\$445,925	\$445,560	\$459,278	\$501,874	\$510,878	\$510,878	\$510,878	\$510,878
Other/New Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$505,032	\$820,348	\$824,966	\$835,560	\$860,558	\$914,764	\$935,717	\$948,016	\$960,675	\$998,705
Annual Surplus/Deficit	\$24,561	\$111,481	\$108,085	\$82,038	\$69,293	\$84,619	\$65,522	\$36,564	\$6,723	\$970

Figure 7-4 Paratransit Service and Special Needs Transportation – FY 2005/06- FY 2014-2015

	FY 2005/06	FY 2006/07	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15
Paratransit Service (Local)										
Service Hours	45,453	47,726	50,112	52,618	55,249	58,011	60,912	63,957	67,155	70,513
Hourly Rate	\$30.65	\$32.18	\$33.79	\$35.48	\$37.26	\$39.12	\$41.07	\$43.13	\$45.28	\$47.55
Contractor Administrative Cost	\$1,150,132	\$1,207,639	\$1,268,021	\$1,331,422	\$1,397,993	\$1,467,892	\$1,541,287	\$1,618,351	\$1,699,269	\$1,784,232
Local Paratransit Op Cost	\$2,543,274	\$2,743,577	\$2,961,393	\$3,198,365	\$3,456,298	\$3,737,173	\$4,043,169	\$4,376,677	\$4,740,323	\$5,136,994
Paratransit Service (Intercounty)										
Service Hours	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958	13,958
Contractor Vehicle Hourly Rate	\$35.29	\$36.35	\$37.44	\$38.56	\$39.72	\$40.91	\$42.14	\$43.40	\$44.70	\$46.05
Contractor Administrative Cost	\$278,928	\$287,296	\$295,915	\$304,792	\$313,936	\$323,354	\$333,055	\$343,046	\$353,338	\$363,938
Intercounty Paratransit Op Cost	\$771,506	\$794,651	\$818,491	\$843,045	\$868,337	\$894,387	\$921,218	\$948,855	\$977,321	\$1,006,640
EZ Rider Transit Services	\$125,404	\$129,166	\$133,041	\$137,032	\$141,143	\$145,378	\$149,739	\$154,231	\$158,858	\$163,624
MCTD Administration	\$440,791	\$654,841	\$621,479	\$700,659	\$782,229	\$866,261	\$952,833	\$1,042,023	\$1,133,913	\$1,228,588
Loan Repayment	\$180,280	\$392,240	\$127,240	\$53,040	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
General Insurance	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Fuel	\$396,750	\$456,263	\$524,702	\$603,407	\$724,089	\$868,906	\$1,042,688	\$1,251,225	\$1,501,470	\$1,801,764
Central Dispatch (Mera)	\$39,584	\$40,772	\$41,995	\$43,255	\$44,553	\$45,889	\$47,266	\$48,684	\$50,144	\$51,649
Other expenses/Youth Tickets	\$70,000									
Homeward Bound Bus Tickets	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel Training	\$0	\$140,000	\$144,200	\$148,526	\$152,695	\$157,276	\$161,994	\$166,854	\$171,859	\$177,015
Supplemental Taxi Program	\$0	\$50,000	\$72,000	\$75,600	\$79,380	\$83,349	\$87,516	\$91,892	\$96,487	\$101,311
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,662,589	\$5,496,510	\$5,539,541	\$5,897,930	\$6,343,722	\$6,893,619	\$7,501,424	\$8,100,441	\$8,850,375	\$9,687,585
Operating Revenues										
Paratransit Fares (Local)	\$177,160	\$182,475	\$187,949	\$193,588	\$199,395	\$205,377	\$211,538	\$217,884	\$224,421	\$231,154
Paratransit Fares (Intercounty)	\$67,980	\$70,019	\$72,120	\$74,284	\$76,512	\$78,807	\$81,172	\$83,607	\$86,115	\$88,698
State Transit Assistance (STA)	\$48,655	\$50,115	\$51,618	\$53,167	\$54,762	\$56,405	\$58,097	\$59,840	\$61,635	\$63,484
Property Tax	\$2,361,961	\$2,385,897	\$2,343,846	\$2,607,386	\$2,897,207	\$3,194,040	\$3,573,668	\$3,796,922	\$4,034,687	\$4,287,907
Fuel Reimbursement	\$173,111	\$199,077	\$228,939	\$263,280	\$315,936	\$379,123	\$454,947	\$545,937	\$655,124	\$786,149
Interest	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Property Tax Transfer Fees	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000
GGT Local Paratransit Payment	\$79,659	\$525,000	\$551,250	\$578,813	\$607,753	\$638,141	\$670,048	\$703,550	\$738,728	\$775,664
GGT Intercounty Paratransit Payment	\$703,526	\$724,632	\$746,371	\$768,762	\$791,825	\$815,579	\$840,047	\$865,248	\$891,206	\$917,942
Measure A	\$1,365,000	\$1,337,742	\$1,337,776	\$1,336,679	\$1,377,834	\$1,505,623	\$1,532,634	\$1,532,634	\$1,532,634	\$1,532,634
Other/New Revenue	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$285,000	\$625,000	\$1,000,000
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$5,099,552	\$5,497,458	\$5,542,369	\$5,898,457	\$6,343,723	\$6,895,595	\$7,519,651	\$8,113,122	\$8,872,050	\$9,706,132
Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	\$436,963	\$948	\$2,828	\$527	\$0	\$1,976	\$18,228	\$12,681	\$21,675	\$18,547

Fare Policy

Fare policy recommendations included in this chapter are intended to meet the following objectives:

- Maintain a minimum 30% farebox return.
- Implement new fare media that encourage ridership and simplify fare paying.
- Keep MCTD's fares in line with peer systems.

MCTD's base fare of \$2.00 for an adult cash fare is among the highest in the Country, and the highest in the Bay Area. Fares have been raised over the years, often in response to fare increases at Golden Gate Transit, since local transit riders make local trips on Golden Gate's regional system.

MCTD's current fare structure for fixed route and paratransit service are summarized in Figure 7-5 below.

Despite having one of the highest fares in the Country, MCTD does not recover more than the average amount of revenue from fares. The average fare collected per recorded rider in 2004-05 was less than \$1.00, reflecting two "free fare programs" – the Ride and Roll program that gave free transit to participating school students traveling to and from school and the Homeward Bound program giving free fares to clients in their program. The low revenue per passenger may also be a result of a relatively high transfer rate of over 30%, which suggests that 30% of the time, a passenger boards a bus with no additional fare collected. Last year, MCTD collected 22% of its operating cost from farebox receipts, leaving an average subsidy per passenger of \$3.34.

Peer Review

To evaluate MCTD's fare program, a peer study of 13 California transit systems was completed. Summary information is provided in Figure 7-6.

Figure 7-5 Current MCTD Fare Structure

	Adult	Senior/ Disabled	Youth 6-18	Under 5 ¹	ADA Eligible Paratransit Rider ²
FIXED ROUTE					
Cash Fare	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	FREE	
20-Ticket Ride	\$1.80	NA	\$1.00 ⁴		
Transfers	FREE ³ within Marin	FREE within Marin	FREE within Marin		
West Marin Stage	\$1.50	\$0.75	\$0.75	FREE	
PARATRANSIT					
IN Mandated Service Area					\$2.00
OUTSIDE Mandated Area					\$2.50

¹. Children Under 5 ride free when accompanied by a fare paying adult

². Paratransit riders may bring a guest on a space available basis at the full fare for service. Attendants may ride at no cost when accompanying riders who require attendants for their travel.

³. Transfers may be used up to two times within a 1.5 hour period on any local route

⁴. Students receiving subsidized lunches in middle and high school receive tickets at no cost.

Figure 7-6 Fare Programs—Peer Review

	CASH FARES						PASSES						TICKETS-PUNCH CARDS					
	Full Cash Fare	Senior	Disabled	Child	ADA	Daily	Senior/	Senior/	Senior/	Ticket Books or Punch Cards	Ticket Books or Punch Cards 2	Senior / Disabled Books or Punch Cards	Student / Youth Books or Punch Cards	Other	Paratransit Books or Punch Cards			
Current MCTD	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	FREE	\$2.00 - \$2.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20-ticket Pass \$38.00	N/A	N/A	20-ticket Pass \$20.00	Low-income students receive free tickets	N/A			
Mendocino MTA	\$0.75	\$0.35	\$0.35	FREE	\$2.75 - \$3.00	N/A	N/A	\$17.00 (Ukiah only)	N/A	18-ride Pass \$10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
Union City Transit	\$1.25	\$0.45	\$0.45	FREE	\$2.00	N/A	N/A	\$37.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10-ride ticket sheet \$20			
LAVTA	\$1.25	\$0.40	\$0.40	FREE	\$1.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10-ride Pass \$8.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	Senior Midday Pass (9am-2pm) FREE	10-ride ticket strip \$12.50			
Central Contra Costa	\$1.50	\$0.75	\$0.75	FREE	\$3.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10-ride Pass \$15.00 / 20-ride Pass \$25.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	Seniors 10am - 2pm FREE, Express 40 Ride Pass \$70.00	N/A			
Tri Delta	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$0.50	FREE	\$2-\$4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20-ride Pass \$18.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dial-a-Ride Book Ten \$2 coupons \$20.00			
Sonoma County Transit	\$1.10	\$0.55	\$0.55	FREE	\$2.60 - \$6.45	N/A	N/A	\$52.00	N/A	20-ride Pass \$26 - \$58	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
Napa Vine	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$0.50	FREE (\$0.75 >2 children under 5)	\$2.00 - \$3.50	N/A	N/A	\$40.00	N/A	20-ride Pass \$17	N/A	20-ride Punch Pass \$8	20-ride Punch Pass \$10	\$0.75 per child, over 2 children, Ages 90+ ride free	\$17 (\$20-worth punch card)			
Fairfield Suisun	\$1.00 - \$5.00	\$0.60 - \$2.50	\$0.60 - \$2.50	FREE	\$2.50 - \$6.00	N/A	N/A	\$42 - \$47	N/A	\$10 General Use Ticket Book	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$15 multi-ride book			
YoloBus	\$1.50	\$0.60	\$0.60	FREE	\$1.00 - \$2.00	\$4.50	\$2.25	\$80.00	\$2.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10-Tickets \$12.50 - \$20.00			
Monterey-Salinas	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	FREE	\$2.50 - \$10.00	\$4.50 - \$9.00	\$2.25	\$60.00	\$2.25	20-Ride Pass \$40.00	N/A	20-Ride Book \$20.00	20-Ride Book \$20.00	All Zone Pass \$122 (\$61 Senior / Disabled / Student)	Ten \$0.50 tickets \$5, Ten \$2.50 tickets \$25			
Santa Cruz	\$1.50	\$0.65	\$0.65	FREE (height <46")	\$3.00	\$4.50 (\$8)	N/A	\$50.00	\$2.25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
SamTrans	\$1.25	\$0.60	\$0.60	FREE (extra children pay \$0.75 / person)	\$2.00	N/A	N/A	\$40.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10-Ride ticket book (\$20)			
VTA	\$1.75	\$0.75	\$0.75	FREE	\$3.00	\$5.25	\$2.25	\$61.25	\$2.25	5-day Pass Tokens \$23.60 (\$20.25 Youth)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Express Day Pass \$10.50	N/A			

Peer Cash Fares

The peer review confirmed that MCTD has one of the highest cash fares in the region. Only Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) matches the MCTD local fare, and none exceed it.

Most transit operators offer discounts to senior and disabled riders, generally at approximately 50%, but often even more deeply discounted. LAVTA's \$0.40 fare for seniors and disabled riders is a 70% discount compared with the full cash fare.

Not all transit operators offer any type of discount for student or youth riders beyond the almost universal "free" fare given to very young children. Of the 13 peers studied, only six gave any type of discounted fare and only **two** gave a youth discount down to 50% of the cash fare. Monterey Salinas, which as a \$2.00 cash fare for adults gives a 50% discount to youth as well as seniors and persons with disabilities, similar to MCTD.

MCTD's paratransit fares, on the other hand, are either the same as or lower than many peer systems. This is especially significant since fares allowed under the American's With Disabilities Act, at twice the full cash fare would allow MCTD to have a much higher fare of \$4.00 for a basic local paratransit trip.

Pre-paid Fare Media

Pre-paid fare media fall into two major categories – multi-ride tickets or punch passes, and monthly or annual passes. Most of the peer transit systems offer at least some type of prepaid fare media, and many offer both major types of media. Ten of the 13 systems studied offered

monthly passes and eight offer some type of ticket or punch card program.

Deeper discounts are generally available for regular riders who use monthly passes, because riders can make unlimited trips within a given month. Once a regular traveler has made the number of trips equal to the cost of the pass all other rides are essentially made for free. This type of fare instrument encourages high usage of the system because additional trips can be made at no additional cost. The average "multiplier" or the number of rides that would need to be taken to equal the cost of the monthly pass was 37, ranging from 30 in Monterey Salinas, which had the highest cash fare to 53 on Yolobus, where the pass is considered a convenience. Monthly passes for discounted fares are often offered at a slightly higher discount, with an average multiplier of only 17. Youth monthly passes were generally offered at substantially higher rates than other discounted fares, at multipliers closer to the full adult pass.

Santa Clara VTA offers an annual pass program that is modeled on the annual pass program in Paris. Riders pay for a pass once (\$674 per year for regular cash; \$539 for youth, \$286 senior and disabled), and passes are automatically mailed to the rider's address on a monthly basis. The annual pass offers an additional discount off of monthly passes.

A few of the operators surveyed offer weekly passes, but these are seen as administratively difficult to implement, and are less popular than monthly passes or multi-ride tickets.

Multi-ride tickets and punch passes are offered at lower discounts, primarily as a convenience for more occasional riders. A 10 or 20% dis-

count is commonly offered for tickets purchased in books of 10- or 20-rides.

An increasingly common type of pass is the day pass that generally replaces paper transfers for properties that implement it. Day passes are typically priced at more than two fares but less than four fares for the day. This allows a rider to pay once and make as many trips as he/she wants during a single calendar day. Day passes can be purchased on board the vehicle and are the fare instrument of choice for systems that don't offer free transfers.

Cash Fare Levels

MCTD's riders generally feel that current fares are too high. Only 48% of survey respondents felt that local transit was either an excellent or good value for fare paid, and a full 20% said that it was either a poor or very poor value. This was one of the lowest overall ratings of service attributes recorded on the survey.

When asked in an open ended question to state the most important way to improve local transit service, 34% said to lower fares; second only to the 59% who requested increased frequency.

Reducing the cash fare is not the best way of meeting system goals for improved service and relieving the burden on riders. As described in the section on fare elasticity, reducing cash fares would likely increase ridership, but not enough to make up for loss of revenue.

Holding the line on cash fares at least until July 2006 or until most of the service plan has been implemented is recommended. This will give time for MCTD's local fare to fall closer "in line" with peers, and will help riders link improved service to increases in fares, rather than

simply maintaining existing service. There are several exceptions to this recommendation:

1. **West Marin Stagecoach Fares should be brought in line with the rest of the system.** It does not make sense to have the longest trips in the system be the ones charged the least. Outreach in West Marin suggests that passengers often pay the \$2.00 fare today, and generally support the fare increase. Discount fares, including the youth fare, would increase to \$1.00.
2. **Either eliminate or find another source of funding for the Homeward Bound free ticket program when MCTD becomes responsible for all local service.** Currently, free ride tickets printed and distributed by Homeward Bound represent about \$70,000 in deferred fare revenue. Most of these trips are made on the Route 57 that most directly serves Homeward Bound's facility in Novato. This is a transition route, and Golden Gate has agreed to accept these tickets for the duration of their responsibility, which ends in April 2006. MCTD cannot afford to continue to "give away" fares, even for this very desirable purpose. Therefore, another source of funding should be sought immediately, and a program put in place to replace this lost revenue, or the program will need to be terminated.

Once fares are allowed to increase again, fares should be routinely adjusted at the rate of inflation, increasing at increments of \$0.10 or \$0.15 at a time, with emphasis on raising fares in easy to pay increments. Routine small increases are easier to implement than high increases spaced far apart. Every time full cash fares are increased, all fares should automatically follow:

- Discounted fares should be priced at a 50% discount on the full cash fare, so increasing the full fare will automatically

increase discount fares.

- ADA mandated paratransit fares should be priced at 100% of the full cash fare for mandated service, so that paratransit fares also increase at the rate of cash fares for fixed route service.

The introduction of Translink, a prepaid electronic fare media for Bay Area transit operators, will facilitate future incremental fare increases. Moreover, its flexibility should allow for more sophisticated fare pricing for the varying needs of different riders.

Fare Media

Currently, the only fare media other than cash offered to MCTD riders is a 20-ticket book, which offers full cash payers a 10% discount and provides a no-discount convenience to youth riders. Seniors and disabled riders do not have the convenience of pre-paying their fare.

In outreach conducted throughout the County, and in public hearings about the newly implemented youth fare, passengers were very interested in monthly passes. It has not been possible to implement a monthly pass program on MCTD, because Golden Gate does not accept passes on its routes, and a pass is considered incompatible with the MCTD zone fare system.

MCTD has hoped that the implementation of the Translink electronic fare payment system would make it possible to implement a monthly pass program on its local routes. Current programming of the electronic card for Golden Gate does not allow monthly passes since it is focused on measuring distance traveled and counting fare zones for Golden Gate. Additional programming is required to implement a monthly pass, but this should be a high priority

of the district. For this reason, implementation of a monthly pass system is an important, but longer-term goal. Fare media recommendations are divided into two categories – short and long term.

Short Term Recommendations

Before the monthly pass for all local riders can be implemented, improvements can be made using existing fare mechanisms. The first recommendation, tickets for discounted riders, can be put in place this fiscal year. Others require more advance planning and are scheduled for July 1, 2006.

1. **Sell convenience tickets for discounted riders** – Currently, youth riders can buy a convenience ticket book for \$20.00, which allows riders to board without cash. It would be very simple to extend this convenience ticket to all discount riders, including seniors and disabled riders who do not currently have any opportunity to pre-pay their fare. This recommendation could be implemented almost immediately.
2. **Consider a free midday pass for ADA eligible riders** – To be eligible for ADA mandated service, riders are supposed to be unable to use fixed route transit due to their disability. In reality, many ADA eligible riders can use fixed route for a small number of their trips – when walking distances are short or service is especially convenient. With the average subsidy on the fixed route system under \$5.00 per trip and the average subsidy on paratransit at \$35.00 and up, any trips that can be shifted to fixed route represent a savings to the system, even with the elimination of fares. To receive this free fare, riders would be required to prove ADA eligibility. Free trips would be offered only during the midday hours between school peaks, when seats tend to be available.

Free trips would not be available on Golden Gate corridor service, to avoid the need to reimburse Golden Gate for those trips. This could also be an early implementation item, provided that free trips were limited to routes controlled by MCTD.

3. **Prepare for a “consumer choice” taxi program with a 50% discount off the metered fare.** The consumer choice supplemental paratransit program is discussed in Chapter 4. To prepare for this program, taxi scrip will need to be prepared and sold. Generally, books of scrip can be printed with 20/\$1.00 tickets in strips of 5 per page. The book of scrip is sold for \$10.00 – a 50% discount. The rider then uses scrip like cash to pay for their taxi trips, up to a maximum based on distance. Given the average trip length in Marin County, it makes sense that no more than \$20.00 in scrip can be applied to any trip. Anything over that amount would need to be paid in cash. This limits MCTD’s subsidy to no more than \$10.00 per trip for taxi trips, and allows riders to take a trip of almost 7 miles at half price.
4. **Annual Pass for Youth Riders.** MCTD did not implement the annual pass for youth riders in time for the 2005 school year, but should move towards an annual pass for 2006. The annual pass, set at \$350 per student per year will allow students to ride any MCTD local bus at any time (excludes the Golden Gate corridor service and any express routes). The \$350 price is based on 180 school days at \$2.00 fare per day. Free passes can be given to students in the free and reduced lunch program without actually being required to purchase tickets as is required this year.

Some parents have requested a monthly, rather than an annual pass. There are two reasons for this. First, an annual pass requires a fairly complicated process for

dealing with lost passes. One way to get around this is to use the system operating in Paris – the rider buys an annual pass, but the pass is mailed to them monthly. That way, a lost pass is not replaced until the new pass is issued at the end of the month. The cost of mailing is an issue, but not an overwhelming one. The other way to deal with this is to have the schools issue passes and reimburse MCTD. This may be a superior method of dealing with passes, provided that the school has very strict controls on passes and is able to document the number of bus passes delivered and the amount of revenue generated for the pass. An advantage of this method is that schools could reduce the price of the bus pass for their students by raising revenue in another way – fund raising could reduce the price paid by parents as long as the \$350 per pass is paid to MCTD.

Dealing with these issues will be complex and will take some time. MCTD and the school service committee recommended previously should work together on this issue beginning immediately with the goal of putting the program in place for the 2006 school year.

5. **Eco-Pass Program** – Eco Pass programs are commonly used to provide free or deeply discounted services to a large group of potential riders, such as college students, faculty and staff, by collecting a small fee from each eligible person rather than charging the full cost of a pass only to those that use it currently. For example, the City of Berkeley pays for an Eco Pass that allows all City staff to ride AC Transit buses for free upon presenting their City of Berkeley identification card.

More sophisticated employer programs are used by organizations with large numbers of employees or members. The employer allocates the cost of transit equally across all employees or students, regardless of who actually uses the pass.

Since only a percentage of eligible riders will actually use the service, the actual price per participant is very low. AC Transit participates in the University of California's "Class Pass" program. The Class Pass allows UC Berkeley students to ride free upon presenting their student ID with a valid semester sticker. This program is paid for by collecting approximately \$10 per student in their registration fee and allocating it to AC Transit for their use. Annual surveys of pass usage determine the fee for the coming year.

Such programs offer two important advantages. First, they provide a consistent revenue stream that allows agencies to better project passenger revenues. Second, they contribute to ridership growth and stability. This is especially true with University programs, where transit agencies carry a significant number of riders at off-peak times. In other words, serving new college student riders does not necessarily require adding capacity or service despite an increase in both ridership and revenue.

There are disadvantages to these types of programs. Community Transit, in Vancouver Washington which has an extensive Eco Pass program with employers notes that it requires intensive administrative effort to negotiate both new and renewal contracts, as well as tracking individual employer billings. Three FTE's at this agency, about the size of MCTD, have management of this program as a large component of their job. Therefore, initiation of this program is dependant on hiring and training finance and marketing staff at the transit district.

An ideal candidate for the first Eco Pass program is College of Marin, which

has a large student and staff population and is well served by transit. Service to the college will increase with the implementation of the service plan, and the goal should be to time the first Eco Pass demonstration with the implementation of the plan.

Longer Term Recommendations

Longer term strategies should be implemented along with Translink improvements that allow for monthly passes and other flexible fare media in the NorthBay. This is likely to take between 3 and 5 years to implement.

1. **Institute Monthly Passes for Adult, Senior and Disabled Riders.** Most MCTD riders use the system very frequently. A person who uses the system to go to work or school five days a week will use the system at least 44 times in a month (22 days times 2 trips per day). The trade-off in pricing a monthly pass is the "multiplier" – pricing the pass at less than 44 trips per month may reduce revenue while pricing it at more than 44 trips per month may discourage pass use.

Based on peer review, a multiplier of 40, or \$80.00 for the full cash monthly pass is recommended. Discount passes for seniors and riders with disabilities are recommended at a multiplier of 25 or \$25.00 for a monthly pass. Youth riders may be offered a monthly pass at \$40.00, which would raise the annual pass price during the 9-month school year.

Implementing a monthly pass is a high priority, but will have a number of jurisdictional and technical issues associated. As previously mentioned, the technology for monthly passes has not been incorporated into the Translink application for Golden Gate. The issue is how to mix a monthly pass system with a distance

based fare system for regional riders. This is not a major issue except when riders are boarding the 70 or 80, since those are both regional and local routes. Additional programming of Translink will be necessary to allow local riders to board those routes without paying a regional fare.

3. **Long-Term Strategy – Eliminating Transfers.** More and more transit systems are eliminating the paper transfer, and shifting to a day pass. As electronic fare payment becomes more common, paper transfers will become increasingly rare. Instead, transit operators are moving to a system of “day passes” that can be purchased on board the vehicle or can be incorporated into Translink.

Day passes are generally priced at more than 2 times the single ride fare, but in systems like MCTD’s where transfers are an integral part of many rider’s trips, selling a day pass for 2.5 times the single cash fare or \$5.00 per day based on the current fare is ideal. Riders who are required to make multiple transfers are slightly penalized by this system – currently a round trip including transfers would cost only \$4.00, but if the rider takes any additional trips during the day, those trips are deeply discounted.

Riders who don’t buy a day pass, or who don’t use Translink for their fare payment will pay a full fare for every boarding. This encourages use of electronic fare payment and passes, reducing the cash handling by the transit agency and potentially speeding up boarding times.

This long term strategy will require changes to the Translink system, but should be considered as an option when monthly passes are being coded.

Coordination with Regional Services

The recommendations included in this chapter move MCTD toward a more independent fare structure. However, moving away from the Golden Gate structure comes at a price – since it is not possible to draw a firm line between the local and regional system, especially in the 101-corridor, fares must be well coordinated. If Golden Gate raises fare on the 70 and 80 for single zone trips, their fare may be out of sync with MCTD and reconciliation will be required. This is not an easy process, and must be well understood in advance before developing unilateral fare programs.

Fare Model

A fare model predicts the impact of changes in the fare structure and fare pricing on the level of transit use and fare revenues based on a wide range of factors that influence the response of transit users to changes in fare structures and pricing.

Fare Elasticity

Transit ridership is sensitive to changes in fare levels. An increase in fares generally results in at least a temporary decline in transit ridership. This resistance to a change in fares is called “elasticity” – the degree to which users will tolerate a fare increase before changing their level of transit use. The accepted industry elasticity factor is -0.3, which means that for every 10% increase in fares, ridership will decline by 3%. Thus, the net benefit of raising fares 10% is only a 7% increase in revenue.

Apart from changes to transit fares and fare structure, a range of other factors can influence transit ridership levels and, particularly, the response of transit users to an increase in fares. These factors include:

1. **Transit Service Levels.** An increase in service levels at the time of a fare change can mitigate against any negative attitude towards the fare increase. Conversely, a decrease in service levels can compound a negative response. In Marin County, the combination of service cuts and fare increases in 2003 led to a temporary drop of about 10% in ridership. Ridership rebounded on the local system, partly due to the high level of transit dependence (see #2 below); but did not rebound on the regional system due to a number of the factors described in this section.
2. **Transit Dependence.** Where the percentage of “transit dependant” riders is high, the impact of a fare increase on ridership tends to be less, since truly dependant riders may have no other option. However, even among transit dependant riders, a reduction in transit use will occur as discretionary trips are avoided. It will be interesting to track youth ridership on MCTD’s local services resulting from the youth fare changes, which reduced fares for some and increased fares for others.
3. **Economic Conditions.** A growing local economy where there is some degree of inflation can minimize the negative perception of a fare increase. For example, riders may understand that rising gas prices affect transit operations, and may be able to better assess the value of transit against driving when driving gets very expensive.
4. **Employment Levels.** As with economic conditions, employment level trends can either minimize or accentuate the response of transit users to a fare increase.
5. **Population growth.** An increase in pop-

ulation and therefore transit ridership can help counter any potential ridership loss while a declining population of workers and students, the key target markets for transit, will have an exacerbating impact on fare increase related ridership loss.

6. **Consumer Attitudes Towards Transit.** Consumers who are pleased with a service and see its value in the community are more willing to pay more for their service. Consumers who believe that there is no real need to raise fares, or who feel fares are already too high may react more negatively than would otherwise be predicted.

It is difficult to incorporate each of these factors into a fare model, especially because no significant change in base fares is recommended until restructuring is implemented. In evaluating the impacts of ridership and revenues, the standard fare elasticity factor is used. Improvements in routing and frequency should overwhelm ridership drops due to a fare increase associated with the restructuring, however, ridership may dip by as much as 10% during the first few months of restructuring, rebounding within a year to overtake previous ridership levels.

Paratransit Fares

Paratransit fare policy is discussed in Chapter 4. The financial plan assumes that fares for mandated paratransit are maintained at an amount equal to the full cash fare for fixed route service, and that paratransit fares will rise automatically as fixed route fares rise. In addition, an agency fare of \$5.00 per ride is assumed, beginning in FY 2006-07, increasing revenue by approximately \$10,000. The impact of a consumer choice taxi service on both fare revenue and costs begins to be included in the financial

CHAPTER 8 IMPLEMENTATION

Several major actions are required to implement this plan, including public input, finalizing services, marketing, and supporting policies that will ensure the best possible fit between transit service and the County's growing communities. This chapter outlines recommended implementation efforts.

Implementation Of Service Improvements

This section describes the next steps required to successfully implement the proposed MCTD local bus transit service redesign. This section consists of four parts:

- **Phasing.** Because the agency's resources are expected to grow gradually over time, a phasing plan may be needed. While most of the service plan can be implemented quickly, changes dependant on new infrastructure or interagency agreements may take longer.
- **From Adoption to Implementation.** This section discusses the steps required for a successful service implementation of each phase.
- **Monitoring After Implementation.** An annual report to TAM is a requirement of the sales tax measure, and quarterly board reports on key measures are standard procedure for most districts.

Phasing

The last major local bus service restructuring was a sweeping systemwide redesign touching almost every route, designed to "decouple" local and regional responsibilities. This plan was implemented all at once, in a major effort that involved both Golden Gate Transit and MCTD. After any service restructuring, it takes

up to a year for passengers to become familiar with new routes and route numbers, and for ridership to return to "pre-restructuring" levels. Doing another restructuring so soon after the last one may be difficult for riders to absorb. Therefore, it is essential that improvements be phased in a way that is logical and responsive to rider's needs.

Recommendations from this plan can be implemented as soon as fall of 2006, coinciding with the beginning of the 2006-07 school year. The speed at which recommendations can be implemented are dependent on the resolution of a number of issues described below.

In general, we recommend the following approach to phasing:

- **Early Action Implementation** – Early actions can be taken to improve the rural service in Marin County, since this is largely unlinked to the Golden Gate Transit service. Fare and service changes on the West Marin Stage can be implemented no later than fall 2006, allowing the Stage to better coordinate with area schools. Implementing the service changes proposed for the Stage is dependent on a new contract for operations which is scheduled to be bid during the current fiscal year.
- **Paratransit service enhancements** – A new contract is expected to be implemented on July 1, 2006 which can begin to implement paratransit enhancements. The MTC funded study on taxi service in the County should be completed by the end of calendar 2006, allowing a pilot taxi program to be implemented before the end of the 2006-07 fiscal year.
- **South and West of the San Rafael Transit Center** – The recommended

changes south and west of the San Rafael Transit Center be made in Fall 2006. These changes are not dependent on new infrastructure although small buses would be desirable. Changes in this area can be made independent of other changes. However, to implement these routing changes in the Fall of 2006, work must begin immediately (in the Spring of 2006) to secure the stops necessary for the Route 29's planned operation through the Canal area.

- **North of San Rafael Transit Center** – Planned changes to the service plan are not dependent on the creation of a transfer center at Ignacio. If possible, these changes should be implemented with the other changes in Fall 2006. However, implementing this service is dependent on two things:

1. Where there is new service, new bus stops must be sited. Work must begin immediately (in the Spring of 2006) to secure the stops for new service north of San Rafael. These include new service on Route 155 in Novato on Diablo Avenue and Arthur Street, and Route 49 on a small portion of Nova Albion near Northgate Mall.
2. Development of a local initiative partnership between the County's Health and Human Services department and MCTD. While HHS staff participated in the study's Citizens Advisory Committee, additional negotiations are needed to ensure that the service can be expanded and still meet the needs of their target population. Completion of this agreement is necessary to allow MCTD to delete the poorly producing portions of Route 57 that serve the area north of Freitas, replacing this service with the local initiative route.
3. Contract service for small bus community routes – For the new Routes 221, 233, and 347, MCTD will need

to contract an operator for this small bus service. The proposed Route 347, an expansion of the Health and Human Services Shuttle, is already under contract with MV, a contract operator. It is possible that this contract could be expanded to include Route 221 and 233. If not, MCTD will need to contract for this service separately. To be ready for Fall 2006, MCTD will need to begin immediately to secure this service, especially if this additional service needs to be put out to bid. Though the service plan could be implemented in the Fall of 2006 without contracting this small bus service, that would result in temporary service abandonments (until the contracted service began) in portions of Marinwood, Terra Linda, along N. San Pedro Road, and portions of Larkspur and Corte Madera.



From Adoption to Implementation

This Short Range Transit Plan responds to the input received during the planning process, and to the performance standards identified in Measure A and developed through the plan.

The milestones that are yet to be completed include:

Figure 8-1 Plan Milestones

March 20	MCTD Board Adopts Plan
by April 1	TAM Strategic Plan Release
by June 1	TAM Adopts SRTP and Strategic Plan
June 22	TAM Adopts MCTD/TAM Funding Agreement

Milestones include the adoption of the Short Range Plan by the MCTD Board and the adoption of the SRTP by the Transportation Authority of Marin as part of their Strategic Plan process.

This plan includes many new concepts and ideas that will require on-going policy discussion prior to implementation. The Short Range Plan, especially in its later years, is a conceptual document, which is subject to almost continual revision. Measure A requires that the SRTP be revised every two years. Although this document, when adopted, will be the official Short Range Transit Plan for the agency, the service designs and policies presented in the plan still require a number of implementation steps prior to actually making service changes on the street.

The MCTD Board of Directors will adopt the plan following a public hearing.

At the Public Hearing, staff should present the results of the outreach to the Board. Prior to this presentation, staff and/or a consultant should conduct the following analysis:

- If major concerns have been raised by large numbers of people, staff should ask: *“Can the concern be resolved in a way that does not compromise the key principles of the plan and does not create a financial imbalance?”*
- If the answer to the previous question is YES, then staff should develop a proposed change to the plan that resolves the concern.
- In most cases, “fixes” will not be cost neutral. There is very little room for added services in this plan. The Board should be prepared to identify a service change that will not be made in favor of one that has more public acceptance. Additional hearings may be needed so that all affected parties have an opportunity to comment. In some cases, the Board may decide to put a “pilot” service in place with a definite ending date if the service does not meet performance standards. This is not an ideal choice, because it is difficult to eliminate services that riders become dependant on, even if the route fails to meet all standards. At the public hearing, staff should present these issues. Each issue should have a potential resolution and a clear description of (1)



whether that resolution is consistent with the goals of the plan and (2) whether that resolution creates other problems that could generate other complaints.

Additional testimony at the Public Hearing may raise new issues. Beginning the public hearing with a presentation of issues already raised can help reassure attendees that they have been heard. This can allow them to focus their testimony on possible solutions and the real tradeoffs these solutions imply.

Options for Plan Adoption

Board action on the plan will occur after a public hearing on the plan. Given the tremendous effort that will have gone into consolidating input, based on a widely advertised deadline, it is only fair that input received prior to the deadline, and at the Public Hearing, be the basis for a Board decision. A long delay provides opportunities for unnecessary issues to be introduced and creates opportunities for consensus to deteriorate.

The staff recommendation will include a date for the start of service implementation. Many considerations go into this decision. For example, school service changes must be implemented in the fall, with the start of a new school year. Implementation needs to be scheduled to coincide with a driver sign-up, which is controlled



by the contractor.

Following the public hearing, the MCTD Board will have several options:

1. **Adopt the plan as proposed, and direct staff to implement it.**
2. **Adopt the plan with specific changes from public testimony.** Each change is studied by staff in advance, and is ready to implement.
3. **Direct staff to study changes and come back to the Board prior to implementation.** The board may choose to adopt the plan itself, but request that staff come back to the Board prior to making final implementation decisions. Staff intends to come back to the board to specifically approve service changes after plan adoption.
4. **Shelve the plan and elect not to implement any major changes to the present system.** The Board retains the right to reject the service changes proposed in the plan and to essentially send staff “back to the drawing board”. Outright rejection of the plan should be a last resort.

What It Means to Vote Yes on a Service Change

When voting for a major service change, such as the one proposed in this plan, Board members and staff should be aware, that no service plan can possibly satisfy all constituents. A vote for a service plan change should be considered very carefully for the following reasons:

- **Further significant changes should not be made for a year, except as noted below.** Any major service restructuring must operate for a year before performance results can be known. Ridership resulting from new service patterns takes a year to develop, and a complete cycle of seasonal variations must also be observed.

- **Service redesigns are largely irreversible.** Given the previous point, by the time the system is ready for further redesign, the new system will have been running for a year, memories of the “old” system will be fading, and enough travel patterns will have changed that “going back to the old system” will itself be a disruption to many riders. Should MCTD choose to undo the entire restructuring, or parts of it, after a year, it will find that the political process for doing so is no easier than the process of implementing the change in the first place.
- **Ridership may drop in the first months of redesigned service, but this does not indicate failure.** Typically, the shock of a major change causes a small ridership drop, usually between 5 and 10% before ridership starts to build as the benefits of the new service are noticed. Ridership declined by as much as 15% after the 2003 restructuring, and quickly rebounded, topping previous levels within 6 months.
- **A spike in complaints will occur with the implementation of new service. This does not indicate failure.** Those who are inconvenienced by a change will complain at once, while those who benefit will notice the improvements gradually and may never express appreciation. As a result, negative feedback is always louder than positive feedback in the wake of the service change, regardless of the overall benefit of the change to the community. Ridership, after several months, is a better indication than public comment of whether the service change is succeeding.

Despite the potential complaints, and even negative statistics in the first months, there are only three reasons to make service changes in the first year of a major restructuring. These are:

Failure to Make Connections. If a line is failing to operate on-time, causing timed connections

to be missed or providing inadequate driver breaks, service may be streamlined to eliminate this problem. Staff has already tried to minimize the chances of this by extensive field-testing of the plan. Included in this category are minor time changes necessary to make better meets with school bell times, but ONLY on dedicated school service routes. No regular trip should be altered to serve a school bell time if that means missing its meets for all other customers. If times are simply unworkable, a new school trip may be added to meet the bell time demand.

Safety. As always, a safety problem should be corrected immediately. While field testing has been completed, some safety issues are not foreseeable, such as those arising from land use activities that may affect bus stops or movements.

Overloads and Pass-ups. If pass-ups are occurring, immediate corrective action is required. MCTD passengers must have complete confidence that they will be able to board the trip of their choice. The risk of pass-ups is highest on routes that will be operating with small buses that generally don't tolerate standees. Exceptional pass-ups can be covered by the “extra board” of spare drivers and vehicles dispatched by Golden Gate Transit, or by switching a small bus for a larger one. This “switch” will be difficult because the contract price structure is based on vehicle size.

MCTD meets regularly with Golden Gate and Whistlestop Wheels staff to identify and correct operational issues of this type. Any corrective action with a financial implication should be approved by the Board.

Plan Implementation

Implementing a major service change takes a substantial coordinated effort between MCTD staff and its contract operators. Most actions are simply amplified versions of things that are already done, such as training drivers on lines or moving bus stops, but the amplification of staff effort will be dramatic. MCTD does not have the staff necessary to make a seamless service change happen.

We recommend that all changes for all routes contracted to Golden Gate Transit, as well as for new contracted small bus service, be made at one time for the Fall of 2006. We also recommend an implementation consultant team be selected to help MCTD through the opening days of any service change. Following implementation, MCTD should be prepared to follow through with increased staffing levels to manage and monitor service.

The most labor-intensive implementation tasks for a major service change are as follows:

- Developing new informational materials for the new service, not only describing the service but also promoting the service in the best light. This should be an MCTD responsibility. Coordination with the contract operators is critical, ensuring that service changes get into all route maps, schedule books and other materials.
- Distributing informational materials and responding constructively to inquiries. MCTD will need to add telephone assistance to answer questions and make sure the word gets out. Additional staff may be required at Golden Gate Transit and other contract operators to respond to questions during and through the implementation period.

- Finalizing schedules and runcutting. Runcutting is the process of dividing the bus schedule into pieces of work for the drivers. This is generally done by the contract operators, requiring that service changes be implemented with a new driver sign-up at the contract operator.
- Training drivers on the new services, so that they can not only drive the new lines but also answer questions about them. MCTD should work jointly with the contract operators on this task.
- Moving bus stop signs, and possibly some shelters. This is a particularly labor-intensive task because it must be done rapidly to avoid confusing customers prior to implementation. A huge effort on the weekend prior to service startup is typically the best way to achieve bus stop sign revisions. This is the most common area of failure in implementations, simply because agencies often underestimate the magnitude of the task. In addition,



the implementation of a service change is the most appropriate time to introduce more informative bus stop signage, identifying the lines and their frequencies as described in the capital plan. Service changes should be implemented simultaneous with the sign and bus stop information updates if at all possible.

- Reprogramming overhead signage. Overhead signs are the responsibility of the contract operator, and MCTD will need to work with its contractors to ensure that appropriate signs are used.

To do all of this while sustaining day-to-day operations requires additional staff, and a special management structure for the implementation activities. A common mistake is to assume that the existing staff can handle implementation alongside their ongoing duties; this assumption inevitably causes implementation errors that reflect badly on the agency and on the service change.

The following are the most predictable pitfalls of a major implementation, and strategies for minimizing them. The first, signage replacement, is a common logistical failure. All of the others fall under a general principle, which is: “The whole information system should convey the plan’s values.”

Bus Stop Signage Replacement

There are three categories of bus stop changes that occur due to a service change:

- Deleted stops
- New stops
- Stops that are retained, but with new route information.

The steps for changing stops are as follows:

- **Deleted stops.** As early as possible in the implementation, and no later than a month in advance, place a decal on each sign at a deleted stop. The decal should say: “No service to this stop after ____ (date). For information, call ____.” This gives customers plenty of warning that service is changing, so that people are not standing forlornly at abandoned bus stops on opening day. The decals will remain informative after implementation. As time permits, deleted stops should then be removed.
- **New stops.** A small number of new stops are required for plan implementation. Because these are the first new stops implemented by MCTD, a process for working with local jurisdictions and getting all necessary approvals must be developed. This will be a critical path issue for service implementation. Once stops are sited, new signs can be posted at new stops at any time prior to implementation, though the later the better. Typically, these signs are covered with plastic bags marked “New MCTD service begins ____ (date)”, with the phone number. In this case, all the bags must be removed the night before implementation. All new stops should comply with ADA requirements.

A way to eliminate this time pressure is to put a removable decal at the top of the sign loudly announcing the new service



and its effective date. These signs then do not have to be modified on implementation day, though the decals should eventually be removed. If the new signs have a new look, as we recommend, then the difference will further call customer attention to the fact that they need to study the sign closely for new information. This approach helps to ensure that passengers are not standing forlornly at new stops before the new service begins.

- **Changed stops.** Stops that are remaining in service, but with different routes serving them, present the biggest challenge, especially since these are likely to include the busiest stops in the system. There are two ways to handle changed stops:
 1. Treat a changed stop as a new stop and a deleted stop at the same location, dealing with each as described above. This is the most capital-intensive approach, since it requires replacing all signs (and briefly having two signs on the same pole), but it is also the easiest to implement accurately, offers the best promotional value, and requires the least intensive overtime effort in the days before new service begins. It also permits the whole system to be “re-inaugurated” with a new look, including new signs everywhere.
 2. Use decals to change the route number information on each existing sign. At stops where old information must be removed, this effort must occur intensively in the 24 hours before implementation. Decals announcing new service can be added earlier, so long as the decals identify the start date of the new service. We recommend using a different “look” for the decals identifying the new service. Service that is unchanged would get these decals last, after all other implementation tasks are complete.

Route Naming/Numbering and Overhead Signage

Most MCTD routes operate on a “string” of cities that should all be mentioned in the signage and headsign related to that route. Routes that operate entirely within one City generally operate largely on a single arterial, which should then become the name for the route. Proposed naming and signage for the proposed route network are included on Figure 8-2.

In this style, each important City is named in the route name and key arterials can also be called out. Key considerations for signage include:

- The sign announces both the name – that is, the cities or major arterial served – and the terminus. This helps clarify which way on the route the bus is going, and also whether it is turning back at a short-line. More importantly, though, it serves as a “passive advertisement” of the service. 22 Sausalito - Kentfield - San Anselmo - San Rafael “ is a pretty complete description of what the bus in question does, and can be used in all printed material. On a headsign with more limited space, the sign might read “22 Sausalito Marin City / Via Kentfield” when southbound and “22 San Rafael / via Kentfield” when northbound. By announcing both the route and the terminal, the overhead sign gives the casual observer some potentially



useful information about the bus system.

- On the newer, more versatile overhead signs, the route name or arterial could appear in a different “font” than the terminus, typically larger. As a citizen grows used to seeing these signs, the possibility of confusing the routing arterial with the terminus disappears. The terminus is always preceded with the small word “to” for the same reason.
- The route number is continuously visible, unlike on some changeable overhead signs.

Monitoring After Implementation

Once the new service is in place, performance should be monitored using the standards discussed in Chapter 2. Close attention should

also be given to running times, to ensure that the routes are cycling as planned. Small schedule adjustments, such as shifting a few minutes from one timepoint to another, are sometimes in order after three months of observations. However, as noted above, no significant changes should be made for one year except in cases of missed connections, safety problems, or overloads and pass-ups. Except for these issues, service adjustments should be avoided between annual service review cycles.

Planning For The Unexpected

This plan covers the fiscal years 2006-2015 in as much detail as can be foreseen from our vantage point in 2006, but many events may occur be-

Figure 8-2 MCTD local fixed routes, Conceptual Signage Scheme

Number	Name for Signs	Headsign Direction 1		Headsign Direction 2	
		Row or Panel 1	Row or Panel 2	Row or Panel 1	Row or Panel 2
17	Marin City - Mill Valley - San Rafael	San Rafael	via Mill Valley	Marin City	via Mill Valley
19	Tiburon - Marin City	Tiburon		Marin City	
22	Sausalito - Marin City - College of Marin - San Anselmo - San Rafael	Sausalito (Marin City)	via College of Marin (Marin City)	San Rafael	via College of Marin
23	Fairfax - San Anselmo - San Rafael	San Rafael	via San Anselmo	Fairfax	via San Anselmo
29	San Anselmo - Larkspur Landing - San Rafael	San Anselmo	via Larkspur Landing	San Rafael	via Larkspur Landing
35	Canal - San Rafael	Canal		San Rafael	
36	Canal - Marin City	Canal	via Highway 101	Marin City	via Highway 101
45	Northgate - San Rafael	Northgate	via Civic Center	San Rafael	via Civic Center
47	Kaiser - HHS - San Rafael	Kaiser	via HHS	San Rafael	via HHS
49	Ignacio - Hamilton - Kaiser - Northgate - San Rafael	Ignacio	via Kaiser (Northgate)	San Rafael	via Kaiser (Northgate)
51	San Marin - Novato - Vintage Oaks - IVC - Ignacio	Ignacio	via Vintage Oaks, IVC	San Marin	via Vintage Oaks
52	Novato Blvd.	Novato Blvd	Downtown	Novato Blvd	Ignacio

(Note: Parenthesis denote additional text that should be included if space or additional panels are available.)

tween now and then that cannot be predicted, or which are not definite enough to reflect in the detailed service packages presented here.

Some significant possibilities not covered directly by this plan include:

- **Development of new funding sources or changes in revenue.** This plan is designed to be financially constrained using relatively conservative funding assumptions. As new funding sources become available, or as revenue projections become clearer, service adjustments may be required.
- **Changes in the Regional Network.** The plan assumes that Golden Gate Transit will continue to support the current regional network of services. Substantial changes in the regional network, especially in the all day services on the 101-corridor could have a dramatic impact on MCTD. Any change in regional services that affect the balance between regional and local service will also have an impact on the relative distribution of funding between MCTD and Golden Gate Transit.
- **New contracting arrangements.** The service plan presented in this document is intended to be “operator neutral” – that is, the plan is not dependant on any one operator to provide a given service. However, the financial element of the plan is based on a number of assumptions about the contract cost and arrangement between MCTD and the contractors. Should MCTD not be able or not be willing to continue its relationship with Golden Gate Transit, other adjustments may be needed in the plan to reflect these changes. While the changes required to institute a new contract cannot be predicted, they can be significant.

