



# West Marin Needs Assessment

## Final Report



August 2009



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- San Geronimo Valley Planning Group
- West Marin Health and Human Services
- The staff of MV Transportation
- The West Marin Needs Assessment Steering Committee
- Participants in the Stakeholder interviews
- Jean Berensmeier
- Supervisor Steve Kinsey



# Executive Summary

The West Marin Transit Needs Assessment evaluates existing transit services in West Marin, identifies the transit needs of both residents and those travelling to and through the study area, and makes recommendations on specific strategies, both short- and long-range, to address service gaps and projected future needs. In addition to recommending service changes, the study recommends several marketing and partnership strategies targeted at increasing ridership. Finally, a capital and financial plan identifies capital and operating expenditures and revenues needed to support the recommended plan.

This document is based on two earlier reports for this project: an Existing Conditions Report, and Service Strategies and Solutions. For some topics, this report summarizes the more detailed information available in those reports. There are two supplemental documents to this report:

- A Supplemental Appendix with detailed information such as rider responses to surveys and detailed boarding and alighting data
- Financial Estimates for Recommended Service Changes, which projects costs for possible service changes.

## Study Process

To prepare the plan, the consultant evaluated existing Stagecoach service, analyzed demographic conditions and trends, conducted data collection onboard the Stage, surveyed riders, and solicited input from the project steering committee, community members, community stakeholders and transit operations staff. The information gathered was then used, in conjunction with field observations, to develop a recommended service plan that best serves Stagecoach riders' transit needs within current and future financial constraints, with the goal of increasing transit ridership over the next five years.

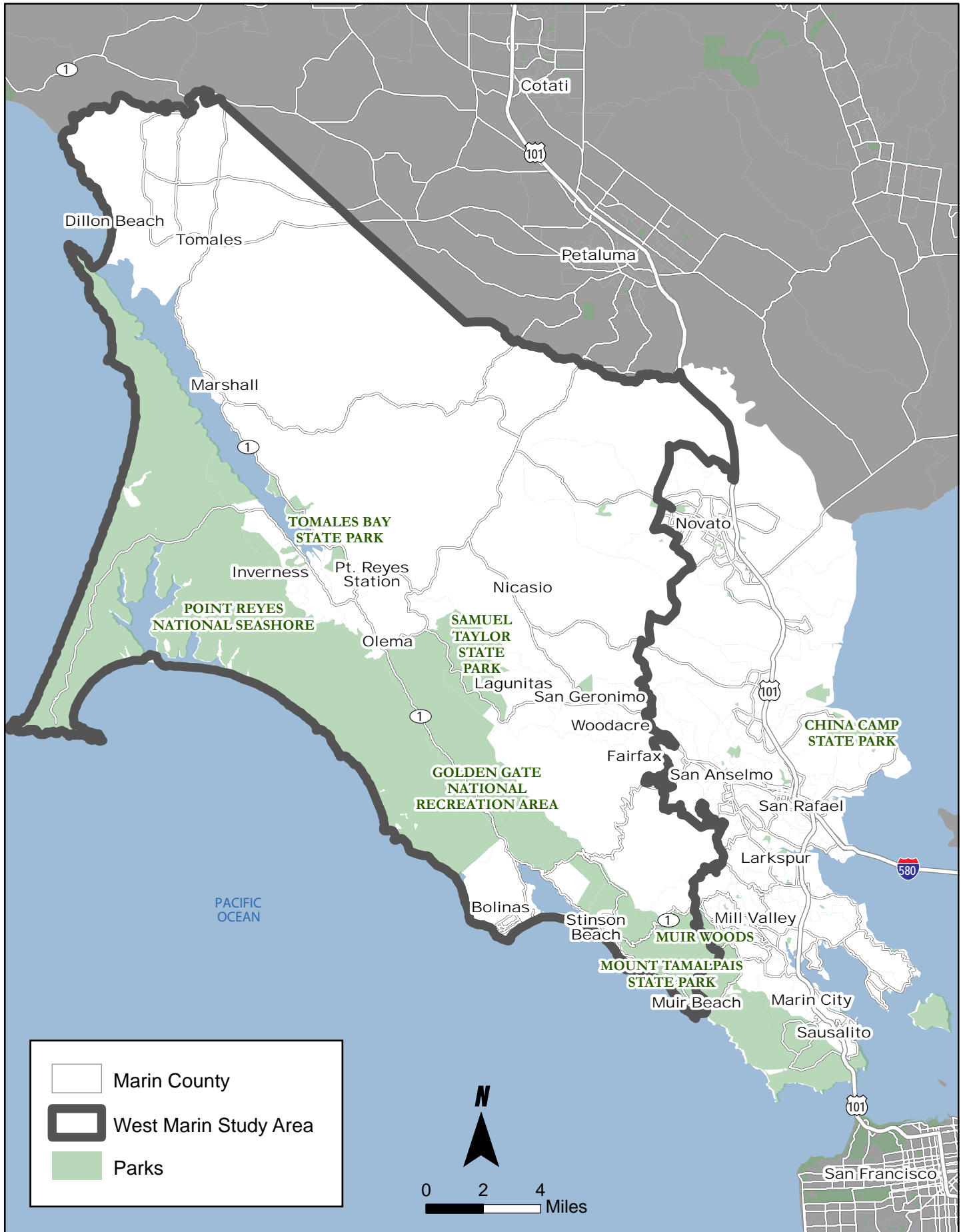
## Study Area

The geographic area covered by the study is the western portion of Marin County, California. Marin is clearly demarcated into three areas, roughly east to west, of urban and suburban development, agricultural activities, and designated open space. This study focuses on the rural areas west of Mount Tamalpais in the south and Fairfax and Novato in the north, extending to the north and west boundaries of the county. This is the area served by the West Marin Stagecoach, a rural fixed-route transit system. See Figure ES-1 for a map of the study area.

The population of the study area is approximately 16,000 people, or about 6.5% of the population of Marin County, residing in more than half the land area of the county. While the overall density of the study area is very low, residents cluster in towns and villages, with the vast areas of designated open space in West Marin being virtually uninhabited. The rate of car ownership is high; only 1% of households do not have a car available to them, compared with just over 5% countywide. Other important differences between West Marin residents and residents of the county overall is that there are fewer seniors (-5%), fewer people with disabilities (-2%), and more lower-income households (+1.5%). Employment is on ranches, farms and fisheries as well as in towns at service jobs.

The population of West Marin is not expected to grow at the same pace as the rest of Marin, because housing prices in West Marin are very high, and job growth is very low. School populations have been shrinking, with most newcomers being retirees or part-time residents.

**Figure ES-1 Map of Study Area, West Marin Needs Assessment**





## Overview of Marin Transit Services

Marin Transit provides both fixed-route and paratransit to West Marin through the West Marin Stagecoach, a fixed-route bus service with three routes. The South Route 61 connects Marin City with Stinson Beach and Bolinas, running seven days a week. The Coastal Route 62 connects Bolinas/Stinson Beach with Point Reyes Station, running on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The North Route 68 Connects Inverness/Point Reyes with San Rafael, and runs seven days a week. All routes run from approximately 6:30 AM to 7:00 PM, but vary between routes and days. Because of the long distances travelled, frequencies vary from 90 minutes to three hours. A map of service routes is shown in Figure ES-2.

Marin Transit has also provided dial-a-ride service to the Muir Beach area. However, the dial-a-ride service is scheduled for discontinuation in July 2009. The Muir Woods Shuttle is a summer-weekend only service connecting Sausalito with Muir Woods. This service is provided through Marin Transit and the National Park Service. In the far northwest part of Marin, Marin Transit provides a “shopper shuttle” once a week that transports residents of Dillon Beach to a shopping center in Petaluma.

In addition to service provided by Marin Transit, Whistlestop Wheels provides paratransit in other parts of Marin and will meet the Stage at or within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of Golden Gate Transit routes to transfer paratransit riders to and from the West Marin Stagecoach. Other transportation services in West Marin include the Point Reyes Lighthouse Shuttle (winter whale watching season only), school bus service from Tamalpais High School and the Shoreline School District, a vanpool operated by the Coast Guard Training Center in Two Rock, and various community-based carpool matching services.

## Funding

The Stage is supported by a Federal Transit Administration program for rural lifeline transit service. Measure A is a half-cent countywide sales tax dedicated to transportation purposes that provides for approximately 60% of the operating costs. The expenditure plan for Measure A stipulates that 3% of the sales tax proceeds be available to support rural transit. Fares cover only a small portion of the cost to operate the Stage. The average subsidy for each passenger trip on the Stage is ten dollars.

# Figure ES-2 West Marin Stagecoach Current Service Map - 2009



**Figure ES-3 Marin Transit District, Rural Transit FY 2008/09  
Operating Costs & Revenues**

Service Level and Costs	FY2008/09 Budget
Stage Operating Costs	\$703,577
Muir Beach Dial-A-Ride	\$42,000
Marketing, Stagecoach	\$20,000
Marketing Muir Beach DAR	\$2,000
Administration	\$141,497
<b>Total Rural Transit Costs</b>	<b>\$909,074</b>
<b>Operating Revenues</b>	
FTA Section 5311 - Stagecoach	\$326,291
Measure A - Rural Transit Allocation	\$602,626
Stage Passenger Revenues (7)	\$65,000
Muir Beach Passenger Revenues*	\$3,000
Admin Revenues	\$39,463
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,036,380</b>
<i>Surplus/(Deficit)</i>	<i>\$127,306</i>

Source: Marin County Transit FY 2008/09 Budget and NelsonNygaard

\* Includes Dial-a-Ride fares and Dial a Ride/Special Tax Program

## Performance Trends

Ridership on the West Marin Stagecoach grew dramatically in FY 2007-2008, with a 63% growth in ridership, compared to only a 24% increase in service miles and a 24% increase in service hours. When ridership growth outpaces increases in service hours, the system is considered more productive—more seats are filled on more of the trips provided. All three Stagecoach routes experienced ridership increases in excess of 50% in annual passenger trips, with the North Route 68 having the highest annual ridership.

Fixed-route operating costs increased by approximately 47% between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008. In FY 2006-2007, approximately \$380,000 was spent to operate the fixed-route service and in FY 2007-2008 about \$561,000 was spent. Costs increased at a faster rate than both service miles and service hours in FY 2007-2008. However, average gasoline prices rose 21% from FY 2007 to FY 2008<sup>1</sup>. With a 24% increase in service miles, the increase in the cost of gas is a large contributor to the increase in operating costs.

As would be expected with increasing ridership, fixed-route revenue grew substantially (62%) between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008. The fixed-route farebox recovery ratio also increased, from 9.6% to 10.6%.

<sup>1</sup> Energy Information Administration, [http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/mg\\_tt\\_usw.htm](http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/mg_tt_usw.htm) July 1 to June 30 FY

A corresponding increase in productivity (passengers per service hour) occurred in FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008, with a system-wide increase of 32%. Routes 68 and 61 increased the number of passengers per revenue hour by more than 40%. The Northern route, Route 68 was the most productive route, carrying more than six passengers per hour. Despite these overall improvements in ridership and productivity, the Coastal Route remains a poor performer, carrying fewer than two passengers per revenue service hour.

**Figure ES-4 Stagecoach Operating Statistics, FY 2006 - 2008**

	FY 2006-2007 Actual	FY 2007-2008 Actual	Percent Change
<b>Fixed Route Service</b>			
Passengers	30,442	49,707	63.3%
Operating Cost	\$380,966	\$561,079	47.3%
Farebox Revenue	\$36,641	\$59,447	62.2%
Revenue Hours	7,776	9,621	23.7%
Revenue Miles	139,751	173,779	24.3%
Passengers/Revenue Hour	3.9	5.2	32.0%
Operating Cost/Revenue Hour	\$48.99	\$58.32	19.0%
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$12.51	\$11.29	-9.8%
Subsidy/Passenger	\$11.31	\$10.09	-10.8%
Average Fare/Passenger	\$1.20	\$1.20	-0.6%
Farebox Recovery Ratio	9.6%	10.6%	10.2%

## Key Findings, Service Gaps & Requested Improvements

The Existing Conditions Report, prepared for the Short Range Transit Plan, provided detailed analysis of data gathered for this planning effort. Data sources included:

- Passenger surveys and boarding counts
- Interviews with key stakeholders and drivers (more than 20 held)
- Focus groups targeting specific rider types (4)
- Public meetings (7)
- Assessment of projected population growth and development

Through analysis of all of the information gathered for this effort, the team identified rider characteristics, ridership patterns, and expressed needs and common requests for service enhancements.

### Rider Characteristics

Compared with the general population of Marin County, Stagecoach riders are younger and have slightly lower household incomes. Three quarters of the riders live in Marin, and of those, 66% live in West Marin. The system is used regularly by youth to go to high school in both Fairfax and Mill Valley. Of those reporting gender, 58% of riders were male. Weekday riders tended to have

ridden the Stagecoach for a longer period of time, with 47% having ridden for between one and five years. In contrast, 35% of weekend riders had ridden the Stage for less than six months. The great majority of riders do not have access to a car; almost half said the Stage was their only transportation option.

## Ridership Patterns

Certain ridership factors varied between weekdays and weekends, most significantly, trip origin and trip purpose. During the week, 85% of riders live within Marin County with more than 60% going to work or to school. On the weekends, just under 70% live in Marin, with 21% coming to Marin from San Francisco. On weekends, recreational users comprise 55% of Stagecoach riders. If the Stagecoach service were not available, almost half the riders would have no transportation alternative, while others would bicycle, walk, or hitchhike.

## Service Enhancement Requests

West Marin residents are generally very satisfied with the service, and consider it a lifeline to employment, schools, and connections to other transit. Comments were predominately favorable, with the most common requests being for increased frequency, earlier and later service, and service to the Bolinas Mesa.

Following is a summary of the service changes and features asked for most frequently or rated most highly from all public input sources. It should be noted that these have not been filtered for feasibility.

**More frequency on all routes:** The most requested service improvement was increased frequency on the North (68) and South (61) routes - for example, six times daily instead of four times. Increased frequency was also linked to peak periods; more service was requested in the Stinson Beach area on weekend afternoons to bring hikers back up Mount Tamalpais. Residents of Bolinas requested more service days for the Coastal Route 62, starting with adding a weekday, followed by adding Sundays. They also requested more frequency, especially in the mid-day.

**Expanded service hours:** Earlier service on the 61 and 68 was requested for travel to work (both eastbound and westbound trips), to school, and to recreational sites. Later service would enable students who participate in after-school activities to get home on transit.

**Connections:** Better connections to regional bus service as well as the Marin Airporter and the Sausalito Ferry were requested.

**Routes and stops:** Several new routes were requested to enable people who live outside West Marin to get to work, to enable seniors to get to medical care, and to provide service to underserved areas. The top route requests were Point Reyes to Petaluma, and Point Reyes to Novato/Terra Linda to provide access to Sutter Hospital and the Kaiser facility in Terra Linda. The most frequent request for an additional stop was on the mesa in Bolinas.

**Improved stop configurations:** The bus drivers' major concern was the physical configuration of the stops. All drivers spoke of the difficulty of stopping in designated stop locations, the lack of a place to pull the bus out of traffic, autos parking in bus stop zones, and having no place to turn the bus around. Particularly difficult stops are downtown Stinson Beach and downtown Point Reyes.

**Expanded bicycle carrying capacity:** Every group cited the lack of space for bicycles on the bus as a serious problem, because for rural routes, bicycles can provide the “last mile” connection from the stop to one’s destination.

## Transit Service Plan

Service improvement proposals were developed based on input from the public as described above, feasibility (other than financial), and a set of guiding principles or goals designed to help focus choices to reflect the operating environment and the values of the community. These goals, listed below, are explained more fully in Chapter 5.

- Goal 1:** Provide Transportation for West Marin Residents
- Goal 2:** Provide Financially Sustainable Service
- Goal 3:** Support Existing Markets While Working to Expand Ridership
- Goal 4:** Focus on Productivity Before Service Expansion

The Transit Service Plan is divided into three phases. Phase I outlines the service recommendations that might be implemented immediately (within 12 to 18 months). Phase II recommendations are short-term, within one to five years, depending on availability of funding. Phase III recommendations are more costly and will be influenced by future revenue and funding.

## General System Enhancements

Recommendations not specific to any route but affecting overall service are:

- Increase bicycle storage capacity on buses as far as is practical and safe. Partner with the Marin County Bicycle Coalition to provide safe bike parking at major stops and transfer points, so that people will not feel it necessary to bring their bikes with them. Partner with bicycle rental companies in West Marin to encourage a “transit + bike” recreational experience in West Marin.
- Procure quieter and more comfortable vehicles. Use hybrid vehicles where the reduced horsepower is not an impediment to providing on-time service. Install bus-to-bus communications usable in the hilly areas of West Marin so drivers can communicate with each other regarding connection times and transferring passengers.
- Implement TransLink on the Stagecoach vehicles.
- Inventory bus stops and assess for accessibility, shelters, and adequate pull-out and turnaround space, and prioritize them for capital improvements.
- Work with partner agencies to install communications networks that allow Stage vehicles and dispatchers to communicate throughout the service area.

## Route-by-Route Recommendations

The following table summarizes the recommendations for immediate, short- and long-term service recommendations. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of these recommendations.

**Figure ES-5 Overview of Short- and Long-Term Recommendations**

Route	Immediate Term (12-18 months)	Short-term Action (1-5 years)	Long-term Actions & Strategies
<b>South 61</b>	Extend Route 61 to Sausalito Ferry	Short-turn service from Stinson Beach to Mt. Home Inn  Design and implement a better bus stop arrangement for downtown Stinson Beach	Adjust schedule earlier and later; add vehicles and drivers  Explore management/charging for parking at Stinson Beach
<b>Coastal 62</b>	Provide deviated fixed-route service to the Health Clinic on the Bolinas mesa on request	Increase frequency ( keep the 62 on the Coastal Route) by adding a mid-day 68 bus  Add a another weekday service day	Deviate to the Point Reyes hostel (in partnership with the National Park Service)  Add more service days as demand warrants (weekdays first, then Sunday)
<b>North 68</b>	(No changes)	Add an early westbound bus to increase frequency and to replace mid-day service provided via the Coastal Route	Work with Parks to connect to possible future recreational services
<b>New service</b>			1 Point Reyes to Novato 2 Point Reyes to Petaluma 3 Extend to northern West Marin and Point Reyes Nat'l Seashore
<b>Other</b>	Partner with MCBC on bike parking/sharing/rentals in West Marin  Partner with West Marin businesses, especially recreational, for co-marketing  Inventory current bus stops for adequate parking and turn-around space, signage, information, shelter, and accessibility	Muir Beach: Explore partnerships with school transportation providers  Muir Beach: Provide a van to a community-based organization for volunteer driver program  Implement TransLink  Continue to look for ways to increase bicycle capacity	Work with GGNRA and Caltrans to establish a bus stop in Muir Beach  Acquire hybrid buses for routes for which they are suitable





# Chapter 1. Introduction

## West Marin Stagecoach

The West Marin Stagecoach began operation in 2002 as a two-year demonstration program created by Marin County to provide residents of West Marin improved access to medical, educational, civic, shopping and workplace sites throughout the County. In addition to providing connectivity between West Marin and the urbanized parts of Marin County, the service connects small farms and ranches and the dispersed coastal towns with a reliable public transit option.

The Stagecoach's three original fixed routes were designed to serve the dispersed and difficult to access portions of West Marin: South Route 61, Coastal Route 62 and North Route 68. The success of these initial services has led to the need for larger vehicles and for service changes that allow the Stagecoach to continue to effectively connect key West Marin communities and provide an auto alternative for weekend visitors to West Marin recreational destinations. Efforts are made to coordinate with Golden Gate Transit, Marin Transit, other West Marin Stagecoach routes and school schedules in order to allow for trip-chaining and to accommodate the particular needs of targeted riders.

The Stagecoach is administered by Marin Transit, and is operated through a contract with MV Transportation. The primary sources of funds that support the service are Marin County Measure A sales tax funds and federal Section 5311 funds available through the Federal Transit Administration. Additional information about funding sources can be found in Chapter 6.

The West Marin Stagecoach operates three routes. The **North Route 68** begins in Inverness and continues through Point Reyes, Lagunitas, and Fairfax until reaching San Rafael. This service runs four times a day every day from each end point, with an additional mid-day trip on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The **South Route 61** travels from downtown Bolinas through Stinson Beach with a short detour to Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley en route to Marin City, with four roundtrips per day on weekdays. On the weekends from early March through early December, the bus originating in Bolinas completes three roundtrips, while an additional bus starts in Marin City and completes four roundtrips. This service has been added in order to better serve weekend tourists and others. In this report, the weekend-only Route 61 originating in Marin City is referred to as Route 61A.

The **Coastal Route 62** runs three times a day on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday between Point Reyes Station to Bolinas via Stinson Beach.

In the six years since Stagecoach operations began, schedules and routes have been revised in order to improve efficiency, system understanding, and ridership. From 2006 to 2007, Route 61 connected Marin City to Stinson Beach on two different routes, alternating between Shoreline Highway on weekdays and Panoramic Highway on weekends. Major construction along the Shoreline Highway began in November 2006 and Route 61 was unofficially changed to the Panoramic Highway. This routing proved confusing for many potential riders, and in April 2007 the bus was permanently routed along Panoramic Highway to provide consistent seven day a week service. A route extension to Point Reyes was permanently added in 2007 to Route 62, running on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Figure 1-1 below shows the West Marin Stagecoach routes for 2008, and Figure 1-2 shows the current Stagecoach schedule.

Figure 1-1 Current Service Map - 2009



**Figure 1-2 West Marin Stagecoach Schedule**

Route	Route Description	Service Hours			Number of Trips (per day)		
		Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
68	North Rt - Eastbound	6:30 AM -6:11 PM	6:30 AM - 6:11 PM	6:30 AM - 6:11 PM	8*	8*	8
68	North Rt - Westbound	8:05 AM -7:53 PM	8:05 AM - 7:53 PM	8:05 AM - 7:53 PM	8*	8*	8
61	South Rt - Eastbound	6:55 AM -6:40 PM	-	-	8	-	-
61	South Rt - Westbound	8:20 AM -8:00 PM	-	-	8	-	-
61A	South Rt - Eastbound	-	10:00 AM - 7:44 PM	10:00AM - 7:44 PM	-	8**	8**
61A	South Rt - Westbound	-	8:40 AM - 7:59 PM	8:40 AM - 7:59 PM	-	8**	8**
62	Coastal Rt - South	9:15 AM -5:01 PM	9:15 AM - 5:01 PM	-	6	6	-
62	Coastal Rt - North	8:15 AM -4:01 PM	8:15 AM - 4:01 PM	-	6	6	-

\* Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, the Rt 62 extends to San Rafael to add one mid day run to this route.

\*\* Three additional roundtrips are provided from March to December for a total of 11.

## Other Marin Transit Service in West Marin

In addition to the Stagecoach, Marin Transit operates several other services in rural Marin County.

### Deviated Route Service

The West Marin Stagecoach provides its own paratransit service for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligible riders. The Stagecoach will deviate up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the regular fixed route during regular service hours to pick up or drop off riders. Requests must be made by phone to Marin Transit at least 24 hours in advance. The Stagecoach Route 61 (South Route) does not deviate on weekends. Whistlestop Wheels paratransit services are available for ADA eligible riders for complementary service to the South Route on the weekends.

### Dillon Beach Shopping Shuttle

The Dillon Beach Shopper Shuttle is a service that was started around 1999 to take residents of Dillon Beach to Petaluma. The service runs once a week on Wednesdays and costs \$2.00 for each one-way trip. The van, which can carry eight to ten riders, picks up five to six people at their homes in the morning. The van takes them to the Kmart Shopping Center in Petaluma, and sometimes other nearby shopping locations, returning to Dillon Beach at around 1 PM. This service is not advertised. The entire trip, with the vehicle starting and ending in San Rafael, covers 125 miles and takes 4.5 hours.

## Muir Beach Dial-A-Ride

Dial-a-ride service to Muir Beach was established in March 2008, and has been discontinued as of July 2009. The service was operated through a contract with Whistlestop Wheels, providing curb-to-curb dial-a-ride service between the Muir Beach area and Tam Junction, Tam High School, Manzanita Park-and-Ride or Marin City. The service operated Wednesday through Sunday, with weekday service from 6 AM to 8 AM and 4 PM to 6 PM, and weekend service between 8 AM and 5 PM.

**Marin Transit, through their contractor Whistlestop Wheels**, provides paratransit services for elderly and disabled persons of Marin County who are deemed eligible under criteria set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act. They do not serve West Marin directly, but will arrange to meet the Stagecoach at or within three-quarters of a mile of a Golden Gate Transit fixed-route stop to transfer an ADA rider to their service.<sup>2</sup> As noted regarding deviated service, the exception is that Whistlestop provides direct paratransit service to complement the Route 61 on the weekends. Eligible persons may schedule rides for any purpose with no restriction or priority, on a first-come/first-served basis. Rides are typically scheduled for medical appointments, shopping, therapy, or visits with family and friends. In short, paratransit service is provided for any purpose where one might use a fixed route bus.<sup>3</sup> Riders may call seven days in advance, or at a minimum, up to 1 day before the scheduled trip. WSW provides mandated paratransit service to complement a regular bus route during the hours it is scheduled to operate. Whistlestop charges a \$2 fare each way, or \$2.50 for pickups and drop-offs out of the ADA mandated service area.

## Other Existing Transportation Services

Besides Marin Transit, several specialized transportation services are provided by other transit operators in West Marin.

**The Muir Woods Shuttle** is a summer-weekend-only service connecting the Sausalito Ferry, Marin City and the Manzanita Park-and-Ride on the eastern end of the route to Muir Woods National Monument, with no intermediate stops. This service started as a three-year pilot project with a Federal Public Lands Discretionary Grant. The County of Marin managed the service contract, in cooperation with the National Park Service, from 2005 through 2008. In 2008, remaining discretionary funding was used to continue the service for one more year. For the 2009 summer season, the cost of the shuttle service will be shared between Marin Transit and the National Park Service under a three-year agreement. During its pilot phase, the service was evaluated each year, leading to adjustments in fares, frequency, and route. Service starts in mid-May and ends at the end of September, with increased frequency during the peak summer months. This service has been very successful, showing increased ridership every year and carrying up to 15% of all park visitors on some weekends.

After it leaves Marin City, the shuttle follows the same route as the Stagecoach Route 61 until it gets to the junction of Panoramic Highway and Shoreline Highway, where it turns south to stay on Shoreline, passing through Muir Beach on the way to Muir Woods. There have been many requests from riders to stop at Muir Beach in either direction, but there are obstacles to establishing a stop there, in particular safety concerns associated with crossing the Highway for those boarding and alighting. The shuttle is often full, which would limit or eliminate seat availability for Muir Beach riders.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview, Whistlestop Wheels, 12/16/2008

<sup>3</sup> Whistlestop Wheels web site, 12/16/2008, <http://www.thewhistlestop.org/transportation.html>

**Point Reyes National Seashore** runs a shuttle from Drake's Beach to the Point Reyes Lighthouse during the winter whale-watching season. This shuttle provides the only access to areas where people can observe sea lions and whales, since when the shuttle is operating, the road to the lighthouse is closed. There is no transit to Drake's Beach, so this shuttle runs independently of any other local transit.

PRNS ran a pilot summer shuttle from the Bear Valley Visitor's Center to Limantour Beach on weekends during the month of July 2008. While it did attract riders and was rated highly by those who took it, there is no source of ongoing funding, and ridership was low. The West Marin Stage stops at the Bear Valley Visitor's Center seven days a week; thus a summer shuttle into the National Seashore would provide a way for people to get from Marin City or San Rafael all the way to the beach on transit.

**Tamalpais High School** provides transportation for their students who live in the southern area of West Marin. The bus starts in Bolinas, goes through Stinson Beach, and then proceeds to Mill Valley via Panoramic Highway. There is one trip in and one trip out each day.

**The Shoreline Unified School District** runs a bus system for its students that covers about 1000 miles a day<sup>4</sup>. Routes extend from Santa Rosa in Sonoma County and Novato in Marin, to north of Bodega Bay, along the coast through Dillon Beach, Tomales Bay, Marshall and Point Reyes. Elementary school students are picked up on their ranches. Other than the school buses, there is no transit service to the Shoreline District schools in Tomales. Drake High School in Fairfax does not provide any transportation for its students; many West Marin students attending Drake High take the Stage's North Route 68.

**The Coast Guard Training Center** in Two Rock operates a shuttle for its students called the Liberty Van. Some employees at the center also commute by vanpool using a service operated by Enterprise Vanpool<sup>5</sup> for commuters traveling from Santa Rosa to Two Rock.

There is an informal community-based dial-a-ride service operated by volunteers in Inverness called the Over the Hill Gang. Similar community-based ridesharing organizations have operated in the past in other West Marin towns. For instance, Go Geronimo used to organize carpools in San Geronimo Valley, and Green Wheels was a ridesharing initiative among employees of the various organizations within Point Reyes Seashore National Park.

## Financial Climate for the West Marin Stagecoach

The Stage is supported by a Federal Transit Administration program for rural lifeline transit service. Approximately 60% of operating costs are from Measure A Funds, a half-cent countywide sales tax dedicated to transportation purposes. The expenditure plan for Measure A stipulates that 3% of the sales tax proceeds be available to rural transit initiatives. As a result of the overall economic downturn starting in 2008, this source is expected to see a 13% drop in the next fiscal year, leading to an operating deficit that will be met through other sources, drawing down agency reserves. Fares cover only a small portion of the cost to operate the Stage. The average subsidy for each passenger trip on the Stage is ten dollars.

The current recession and decline in operating revenues make it impossible to plan for significant system expansion in the immediate-term. This plan provides a blueprint for enhancing

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<sup>4</sup> Interview, Steve Rosenthal, Superintendent, Shoreline Unified School District

<sup>5</sup> Enterprise Vanpool is a division of the Enterprise rental car agency.

Stagecoach service over time, with short-term actions that can be sustained with relatively little new investment over the next one to three years. Even at its fullest implementation, the plan does not attempt to provide service “from everywhere to everywhere” but rather recognizes that providing transit service in relatively low density rural areas requires making difficult choices with the goal of providing the most service to the most promising markets, or maximizing productivity without sacrificing basic mobility. A review of financial performance and a five-year projection for funding can be found in Chapter 6.

## Chapter 2. Demographic Analysis

This chapter provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of West Marin and includes information about current travel habits as well as projections for future transit needs.

### Land Use

West Marin is characterized by small communities surrounded by open space and agriculture. As a result, population densities range from 8.2 persons per square mile to 2887 person per square mile in the 19 block groups, with an average of 478 people per square mile in West Marin. There are more than 150,000 acres, or 230 square miles, dedicated to agriculture in Marin County, all of it in West Marin. In addition, 71,000 acres, or 110 square miles, are designated as the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Figure 2-1 below shows the agricultural areas in West Marin County.

### Population

As of the 2000 US Census, Marin County was home to 247,289 residents. West Marin (as defined above) comprises almost half of the land area of Marin (392 square miles of a total of 828 square miles), but has a very low proportion of the population with 16,289 residents, or approximately 6.5% of the total in the county. This is a result of significant portions of West Marin being dedicated to open space, national and state parks, and agriculture. The California Department of Finance (CDF) projects that as of 2008, Marin's population will have increased to 257,406 residents, or approximately 4% growth in eight years, compared to 12% population growth in California. However, the same growth is not expected in the western part of the County. CDF predicts growth of less than 2% in those areas outside the more developed eastern part of Marin County.<sup>6</sup>

### Density

West Marin is mostly rural and sparsely populated, with a few areas of modest density; the overall population density of West Marin averages 480 people per square mile. However, population density varies widely among census blocks. Large portions of West Marin have no population at all, being designated as National Seashore or part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Transit service is most successful in areas with higher population density. A map of population density can be found at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>6</sup> CA Dept. of Finance, Table 2: E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties & State, 2001-2009, "Balance of County"

Figure 2-1 Agricultural Lands of Marin County



Source: Marin Agricultural Land Trust



## Transportation Disadvantaged Populations: Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Low Income Households

A key focus of any transit plan is to improve transportation options for those who are transit-dependent: seniors, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes. People in these groups tend to have less access to an automobile as their primary mode of transportation. Transportation needs for individuals who are transit-dependent can be especially acute in rural areas with limited local services and low population densities that are not easily served by public transit.

### No-Car Households

In 1999, 5.1% of households in Marin<sup>7</sup> reported that they did not own a vehicle. In West Marin 140 residents, or approximately 1% of the West Marin population, reported not owning a car. It is likely that this number is lower than the county average as a result of the much lower density of the development pattern in communities of West Marin. Non car-owners are equally likely to be homeowners or renters.

### Age

Marin County is a “graying county,” with the median age of the county at 41.3 and rising. As of 2006, 15% of Marin’s population was over the age of 65, with only 20% under the age of 18.<sup>8</sup> The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) estimates that more than 35% of Marin’s population will be over the age of 65 by the year 2020. West Marin last counted 1,629 persons over the age of 65, or 10.3% of the population. More than 10% of households in West Marin are headed by people over age 65, roughly equal to California as a whole, but almost 5% less than Marin overall.

### Disabilities

In Marin County, 14% of residents report having a disability. Households in West Marin report a lower percentage of people with disabilities (12.6%) than in either Marin or California overall.

### Income

In 2000, the median household income in Marin County was \$71,306, significantly higher than the median household income of \$53,629 for California households. West Marin has an average household income of \$65,965, with the lowest income block group at \$45,667 annually and the highest income block group at an average of \$125,000 annually. In West Marin, 8.5% of households in 2000 had incomes below the poverty line, slightly more than in Marin County overall, but a smaller proportion than in California. Of onboard survey respondents, 30% have an annual family income of \$10,000 or less. In general, the incomes reported for Stagecoach riders are lower than the average for Marin County overall.

Figure 2-2 shows the relative percentages of these three populations for California, Marin, and West Marin.

<sup>7</sup> US Census 2000, QT-H11: Vehicles and Household Income in 1999

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Agricultural Statistics Service, National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Figure 2-2 Transit-dependent Households**

	Households, 65+	People with Disabilities	Households Below Poverty Line
California	10.8%	16.3%	13.2%
Marin County	14.9%	14.0%	7.0%
West Marin	10.4%	12.6%	8.5%

Sources: California and Marin – Census 2006 estimates; West Marin – Census 2000

A map showing the location and density of transit-dependent populations in West Marin can be found at the end of this chapter.

## Employment and Employment Density

Employment in West Marin follows the land use pattern, with service jobs in the large towns such as Point Reyes and Stinson Beach, and other employment based on ranches, farms and fisheries. The Census Transportation Planning Package reports 8850 employees working in West Marin, with approximately 2,700 employed in agricultural operations<sup>9</sup>. National and state parks employ workers in West Marin, accounting for between 150 and 200 employees, most commuting from outside of the West Marin area.

Following are three maps showing demographic characteristics of West Marin, based on Census 2000 block groups for this study area. Figure 2-3 shows the population density of West Marin, or where people live; Figure 2-4 shows the density of employment in the area, or where people work; and Figure 2-5 presents concentrations of populations with higher dependency on public transportation—older adults (65 year or older), individuals with disabilities, and those with limited incomes (150% of poverty level).

## Demographic Trends for West Marin

Based on data from Marin County as well as stakeholder interviews, some trends for future demographics and implications for future transit service were identified.

- Travel demand forecasts and population projections suggest that West Marin will continue its pattern of very slow growth over the next decade and beyond. Housing growth in West Marin is very constrained, and will remain so; land prices and rents have been rising for the last decade and will continue to rise.
- Lack of affordable housing means that lower-wage workers commute long distances from East Marin and Sonoma County to work in West Marin. Farm workers are an exception, as they are typically housed onsite. Employers noted that a lack of affordable housing and inter-county transportation services can make hiring difficult.
- Full-time residents are being increasingly replaced by weekend and part-time residents.
- West Marin school populations have been shrinking; this trend is expected to continue, in part because of the high cost of living in this area.
- The proportion of seniors over age 65 in the West Marin population will increase slightly over time, while the number of school-age children will decrease. This trend is consistent

<sup>9</sup> CA Department of Finance, 2002 Marin County Data

with the rest of Marin County and all of the United States; as the baby boomers become senior citizens, average age increases. The percentage of senior residents is increasing as long-time residents get older, and most newcomers are retirees.

Figure 2-3 Population Density of West Marin

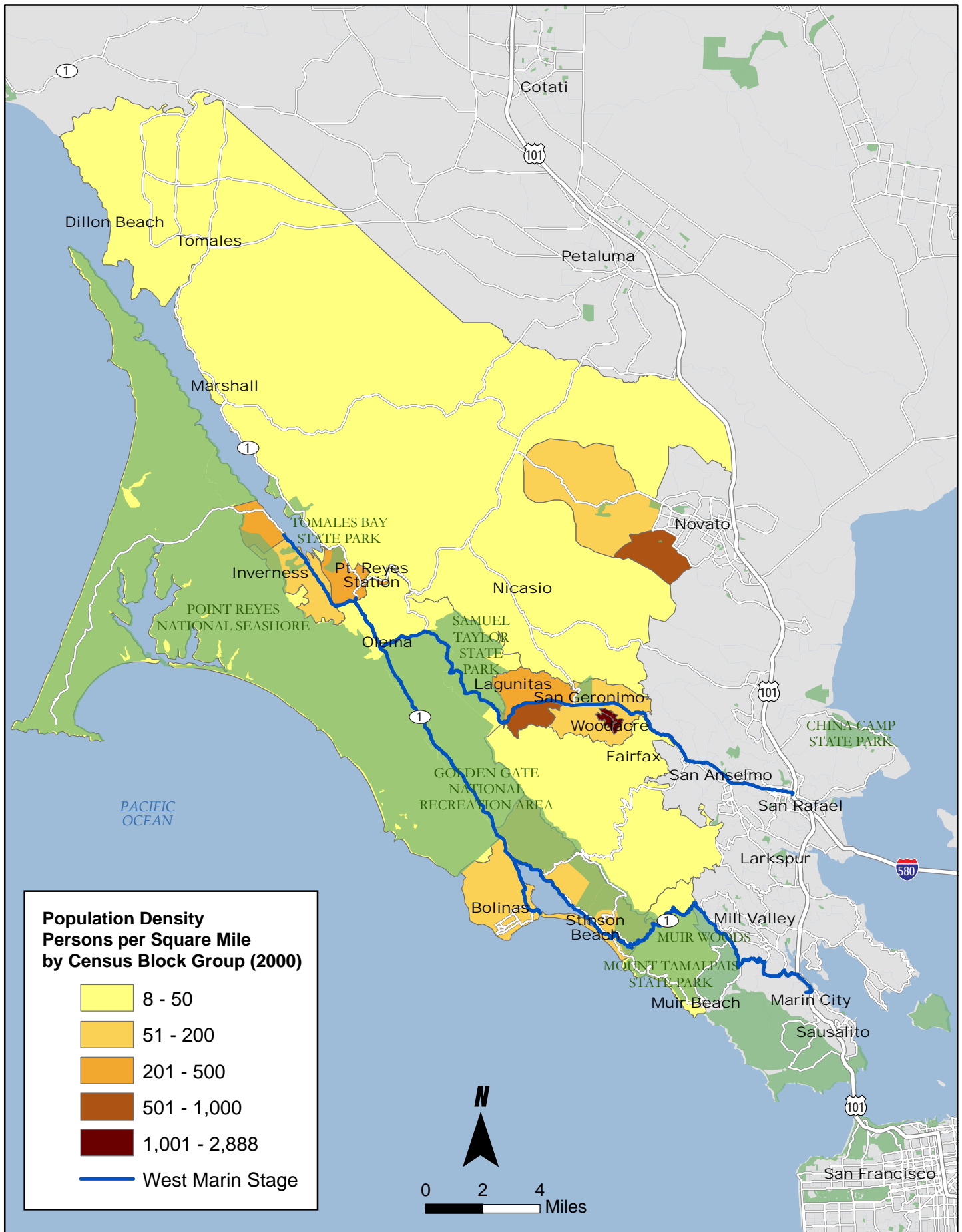


Figure 2-4 Employment Density of West Marin

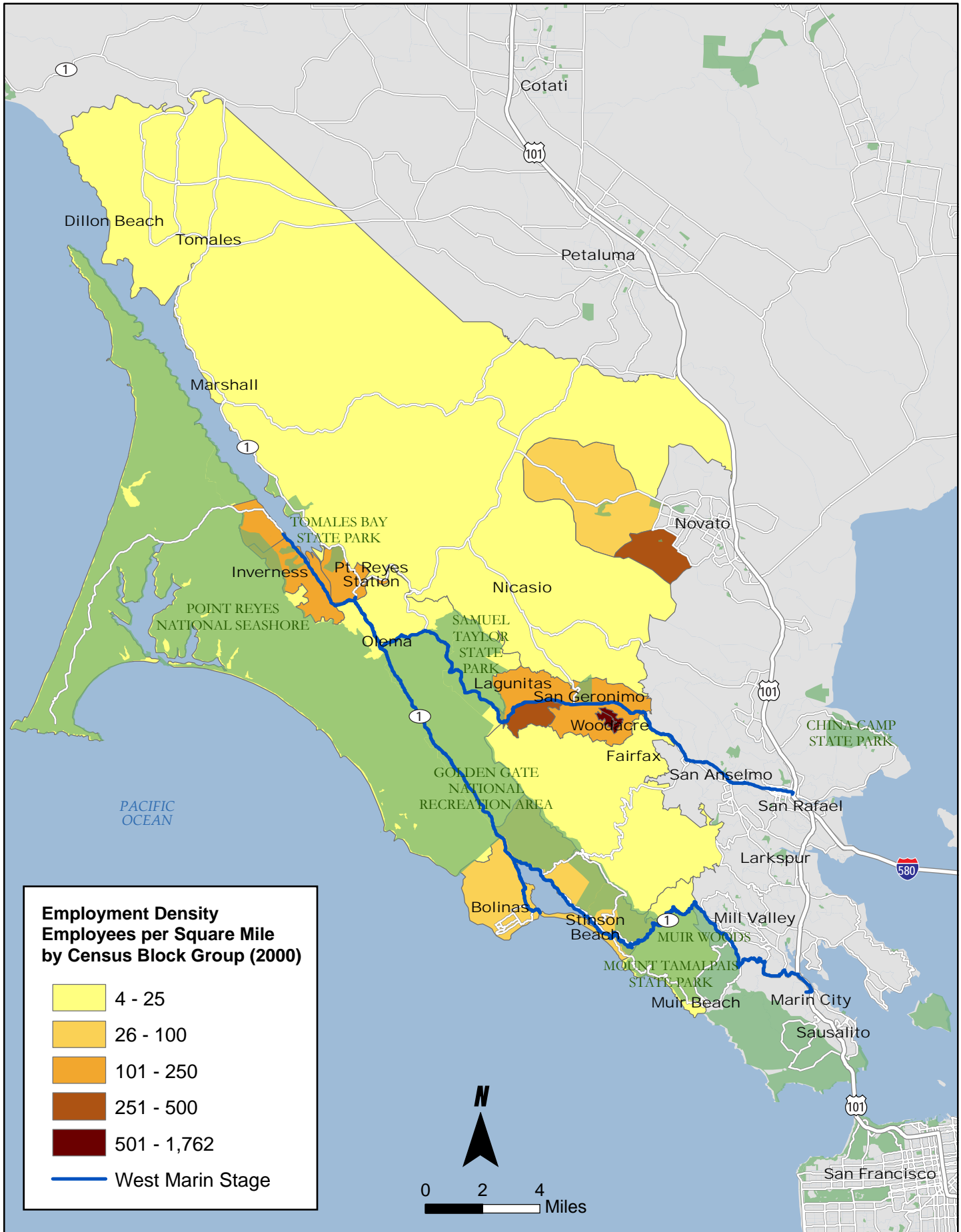
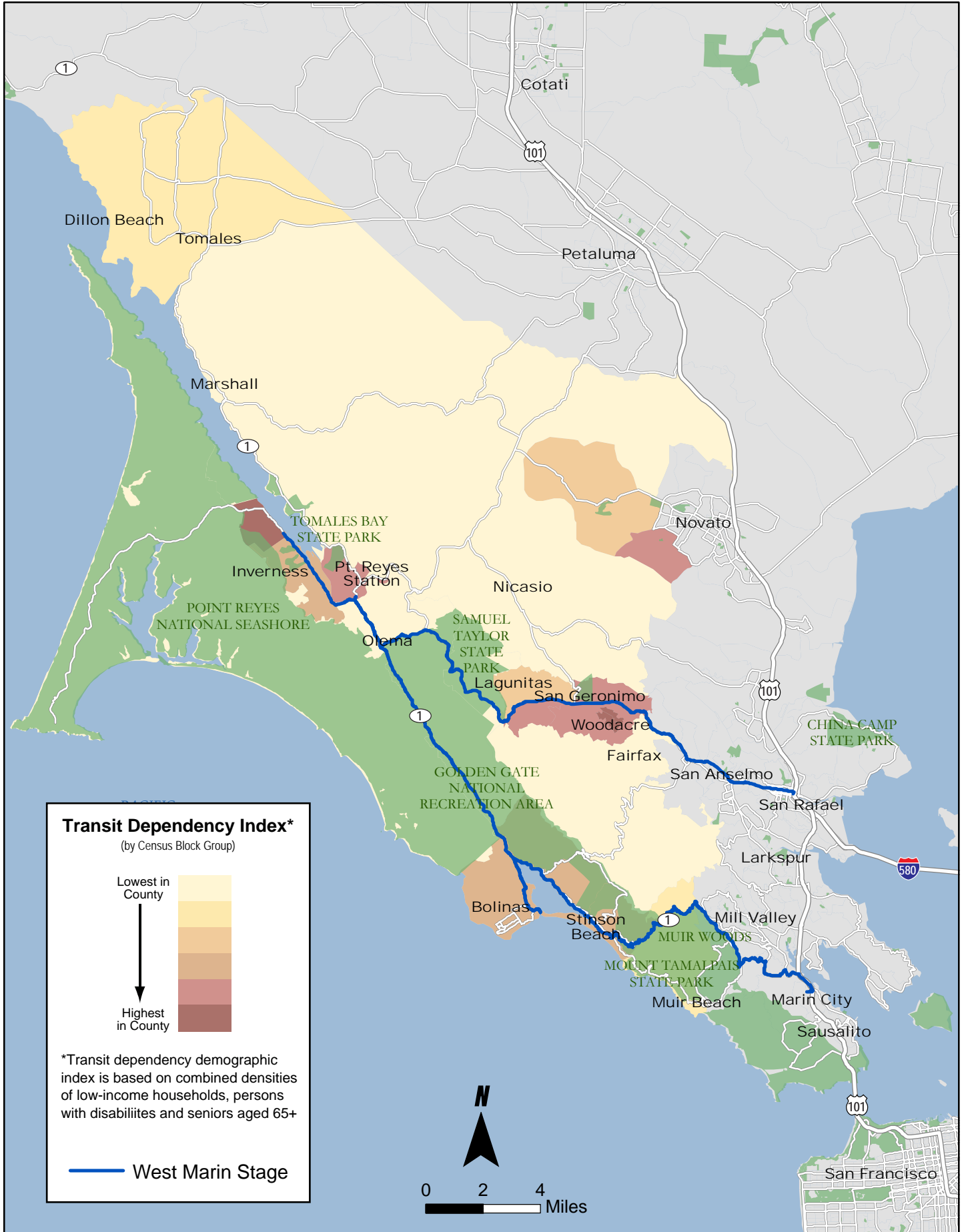


Figure 2-5 Transit Dependency in West Marin



## Travel Demand

Forecasting future demand for all modes on the transportation network is accomplished through the use of a travel demand model. Travel demand modeling uses a mathematical process to replicate observed travel patterns under existing demographic and land use conditions and then assigns future traffic to the street network based on projected conditions. The demographic data establishes relationships between population centers and employment, shopping, recreation, school, and other trip generators. Data in this section was derived from Marin County's EMME2 travel demand model. Land uses and land use intensity are key factors in travel demand estimation. This information is provided to the County by the cities and towns based on their general plans and other locally generated land use information, and incorporated into the travel model. The county model predicts person-trip origins and destinations between each of the county's 116 traffic analysis zones (TAZs), as well as between these TAZs and other counties in the Bay Area.

The county model was developed to predict operating conditions on roadways within Marin. While the model does assign person-trips to various modes, including transit, it was not designed as a tool for estimating transit ridership on a more micro-level or to predict ridership on a single route. However, the model's person-trip origin and destination data is extremely valuable as a tool to predict the potential attractiveness of local transit service. Overall travel demand is an excellent predictor of transit ridership because a transit route can only be successful if it serves a market where travel demand is already high. Thinking of potential transit ridership as a percentage of total trip-making between a given origin and destination, it is logical that higher ridership will be generated in areas with high overall travel demand.

## Trip Purposes

Marin County's travel demand model predicts five trip purposes:

- Home-based work trips, i.e., commuter trips, consist of any trip that has home at one end of the trip and work at the other end.
- Home-based shopping/other trips consist of any trip that has home at one end of the trip and a shopping or other location at the other end.
- Home-based social/recreation trips consist of any trip that has home at one end of the trip and a social or recreation location at the other end.
- Home-based school trips consist of any trip that has home at one end of the trip and a school location at the other end.
- Non home-based trips consist of any trip that does not start or end at home. For example, a trip from work to run an errand would be a non home-based trip.

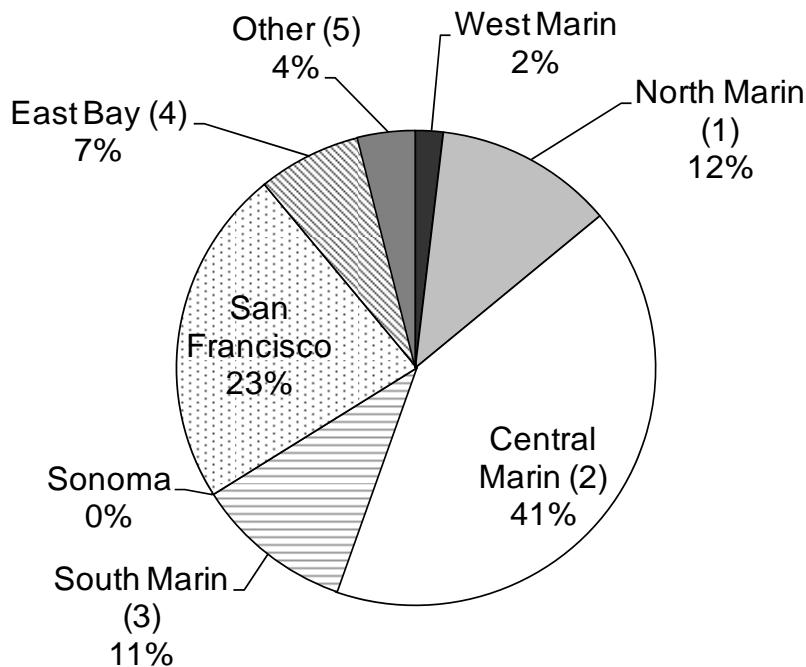
Analysis in this section focuses on trip data and projections related to West Marin only, which includes TAZ 150, 151 and 152. The ABAG data for 2005 indicates that West Marin has 4,005 households, a population of 9,898, 4,026 jobs (1,072 retail employers, 2,390 Service employees and 564 other employees) and 6,182 employee residents (workers).

Trip purpose is important to predicting transit ridership because some types of trips are more likely to be made on transit than others. Recurring trips made at regular times, like home-based work or school trips, are more likely to be captured on transit than occasional trips that are more difficult to schedule or trips made to deliver goods and services.

## Home-Based Work Trips To/From West Marin

ABAG data for 2005 shows 6,411 trips originating in West Marin bound for work. These data show only 2% of these workers remaining in West Marin, with more than 40% working in central Marin, 11% working in southern Marin, and 23% working in San Francisco. Figure 2-6 below shows where West Marin residents worked in 2005.

**Figure 2-6 Home-Based Work Trips from West Marin, 2005**



(1) Novato (2) San Rafael, Larkspur, Corte Madera, Kentfield/Greenbrae, Ross, San Anselmo, Fairfax (3) Tiburon/Strawberry, Mill Valley, Marin City, Sausalito (4) Alameda County, Contra Costa County (5) S. Bay (San Mateo, Santa Clara), Napa/Solano

As of 2005, there were an estimated 6,400 commuters coming to West Marin to work. While more than half come from other parts of Marin County, 15% come from Sonoma County, and another 15% come from Napa and Solano Counties. Projections for 2030 show a 20% increase in workers commuting into West Marin. The balance will remain almost the same, with slight gains in the proportion of residents of other parts of Marin working in West Marin, and fewer coming from Napa and Solano counties.

Going forward, travel demand to and from West Marin is expected to increase and rebalance slightly. Projections for transit demand in 2030 show a 6% increase in home-based work trips originating in West Marin, with a 4% increase in West Marin residents working in Sonoma or Novato. Based on these work trip projections, increased service to Central Marin and Novato might be considered.

West Marin has important connections to the eastern part of Marin and to southern Sonoma County for jobs, shopping, schools, entertainment, and access to regional transit. The West Marin Stagecoach will continue to play an important role in making these connections.



## Chapter 3. Outreach

An important goal of this planning effort is to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders with a common interest in transportation in West Marin to participate in project activities and to influence the project's outcome. Through various means described below, the public was invited to provide perspectives and ideas on all aspects of Stagecoach service, identify barriers to using the West Marin Stage, strategize on solutions most appropriate to meet these needs, and prioritize these solutions. Input was solicited from a broad base of individuals and groups including transit riders and potential riders, transit drivers and managers, social service agencies, and groups with common concerns such as recreational travelers, Spanish-speaking residents, and residents of hard-to-reach communities.

This chapter summarizes the public outreach process for the West Marin Needs Assessment Study, and highlights general themes brought out in this process. Transportation gaps, solutions, and priorities identified through this process are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

### Methods of Public Outreach

The outreach process for this study attempted to elicit input from all sectors of the West Marin population, including current and potential Stage riders. This section summarizes the public outreach process.

**Onboard Surveys.** During the week of November 2 through 9, 2008, a passenger survey was conducted on each of the Stagecoach routes on a typical weekday, Saturday, and Sunday (except Route 62, which does not run on Sunday). Surveyors distributed passenger surveys as riders boarded the bus, instructing them to fill out only one survey during the survey period. A total of 190 surveys were collected: 69 on weekdays, 54 on Saturday, and the remainder on Sunday, with 14% in Spanish. The combined weekday and weekend survey responses were analyzed by route and as a whole. Questions covered trip origin, destination, and purpose; demographic information; and an open-ended request for comments on any aspect of the service. A copy of the survey forms can be found in the Supplemental Appendix.

**Steering Committee.** Early in the project, a Steering Committee was convened with the goal of providing guidance to Marin Transit staff and the consultant team for the duration of the project. The list of invitees was based on a list of West Marin organizations and community leaders provided by Marin Transit, and expanded to include others recommended by this group. Members of the community representing a wide array of interests and with a high level of expertise were invited to participate on the Committee, with the expectation that they would represent the interests of their group, review project materials, and provide data or program information to help support project findings. The Steering Committee first met in November 2008, and has held additional meetings at pivotal points in the study process to review documents, give input, and set priorities. A roster of Steering Committee members is in Appendix A.

**Stakeholder Interviews.** A third strategy employed was to discuss transportation needs in West Marin in depth with a broad range of stakeholders with a vested interest in the area, including representatives from human service agencies, transportation providers, employers and others. The goals of the stakeholder interviews were to identify what is working well with the transportation system, where transportation issues affect the stakeholder, visions for a future system, and perspectives on the future of the communities in the study area.

A list of stakeholders and community leaders was developed with Marin Transit together with local leaders, representing a variety of interests in public transportation services. Interviewees included representatives from national and state parks, local hostel and hotel owners, the Chamber of Commerce, agricultural operations, schools, the Latino community, senior housing and medical services, environmental protection and growth management, and housing advocacy groups. A full description of the results of the stakeholder interviews can be found in the Existing Conditions report and a list of interviewees is in Appendix B.

**Focus Groups.** To complement meetings and interviews, focus groups were convened to gain a better understanding of transportation needs of specific groups of transit users. Groups were identified as a result of the interviews, recommendations from the Steering Committee, and the public meetings. Efforts were made to reach groups that represent diverse and fresh perspectives, have a direct interest in and can speak to transportation needs in their community, and were not being reached through other outreach means. As a result, four focus groups were convened.

*West Marin Stagecoach Drivers and Managers of MV Transit*, which provides the Stagecoach service for Marin transit, provide a unique, long-term and valuable perspective on all aspects of service including rider preferences, route and stop issues, where and when the system is overloaded or underused, and vehicle issues. To capture this unique viewpoint, a meeting was held on November 3, 2008 at Marin Transit, attended by MV's General Manager, Marin Operations Manager, Road Supervisor, and three drivers.

*Recreational Travelers:* Because the project began in October and would be completed by early spring 2009, we could not directly contact recreational travelers who use the Stage or would like to use transit to access the significant recreational sites in West Marin. The focus group for recreational travelers met on January 16, 2009 and included eight representatives from national, state and local parks, hostel managers, local innkeepers, and Visitor's Bureau staff.

*Latino Community:* Over 14% of the surveys collected from Stage riders in November were filled out in Spanish, indicating some use of the service by the Latino community. All community outreach meetings were advertised in Spanish. However, no representatives of the Latino community attended the initial three public meetings. In order to include this population in the study, a focus group of representatives of the Latino community was convened. Through West Marin Latino Family Services, a group of social service providers met on March 25, 2009 and shared their perspectives on transit needs for the Latino community in West Marin.

*Residents of Bolinas:* The Steering Committee recommended that we convene a group in Bolinas, as many residents of this out-of-the-way community rely on the West Marin Stagecoach. This group met on March 24, 2009.

**Public Meetings.** Two sets of public meetings were held to gather input from the public at large. The purpose of the first set of meetings was to collect public input on how the service is both succeeding and lacking; the three first-round meetings were held in December 2008. The second round set laid out some service improvement strategies based on all the sources of public input to verify strategies and priorities; these meetings were held in May-June 2009. Meetings were held at varying locations, days, and times in order to provide the widest opportunity for people to attend. All facilities used are handicapped-accessible, and meetings were scheduled to accommodate those coming by public transit wherever possible. A total of 52 people attended the public meetings.

All comments from the focus groups and outreach meetings were transcribed and sent to the Steering Committee. Based on the comments from the participants in all the public outreach efforts outlined above, major themes, issues, and proposed solutions were identified and prioritized.

## Results of Public Outreach

The results of the outreach efforts described above contributed significantly to the alternatives presented in this report. Following is a summary of findings from this process.

### Identified Transit Needs

Riders and West Marin residents generally have a very positive perception of the Stagecoach service. Of comments gathered from the onboard survey, almost a third complimented the service, referring to how much it is needed, how convenient it is, that it runs on schedule, and that the drivers are friendly. Of greatest concern was that the service continue to operate and not be reduced.

Among the many groups and individuals interviewed, there was wide agreement on the strengths of the service, which include:

- Exceptional on-time performance
- Travel speed comparable to driving
- Routes connecting all major communities in West Marin with each other and with major transfer points, providing connectivity to regional transit
- Friendly drivers
- School service, without which this essential daily transportation would be extremely difficult
- A simple, easy-to-understand fare system for all routes, days, and times
- Newer, larger vehicles that are comfortable and stable
- The “flag stop” system

These are great strengths to build on for the West Marin Stagecoach. When a system is viewed so favorably by the community and when a community feels the level of “ownership” that is felt in West Marin for the Stage, it is important that changes be undertaken only with great care. Services should be given ample time to produce results, and changes should be made only when there is a clear transportation or productivity benefit to the system.

Generally agreed-on weaknesses include:

- The low frequency of trips on all routes, requiring very long waits for the next bus
- Lack of carrying capacity for more than two bicycles per bus
- Need for service that starts earlier in the day and ends later in the evening
- Concern from some riders that there is a lack of awareness regarding the Stagecoach ADA deviated service and difficulty in arranging for it.

## Requests for Service Changes

Following are the service changes and features asked for most frequently or rated most highly from all public input sources. It should be noted that suggested service improvements listed come entirely from the public outreach process, and have not been filtered for feasibility.

### Frequency

The most requested service improvement was increased frequency on all routes. Public perception is that four daily roundtrips leave too large a gap between buses; many stakeholders expressed a desire for additional mid-day service so there would be shorter waits to return home. Long waits are particularly hard on seniors. Additional trips would increase the number of vehicles required for service, as well as adding drivers and service hours.

Coastal Route 62 riders in Bolinas requested both greater frequency of the current service and daily service on the route from Bolinas to Point Reyes. Currently this runs on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday; they would prefer seven days a week.

More service was also requested between the most popular recreational destinations during the crowded summer season. It was suggested that the Stage run one bus from Stinson to the Pan Toll Ranger Station or Mt. Home Inn and back during the summer to handle the afternoon crush loads. Drivers stated that the Stinson to Pan Toll segment is overloaded during the summer, typically between 1 PM and 6 PM; they routinely pick up 22 people in the Stinson Beach parking lot and another 14 downtown, filling the bus to capacity.

### Service Hours

Earlier and later service for both the 61 and 68 was a top request, in order to get people to work and school earlier and home later. Employers in West Marin, especially the parks, also asked for earlier service as it would enable employees and volunteers to get to work on time and let early-bird visitors start their trips earlier in the day. This would also allow a longer on-site visit; since it takes quite a while to get to these sites, visitors want to stay later in the day than allowed by the current Stage schedule. Later service would enable students who participate in afterschool activities to get home on transit.

Related to this are requests for better coordination with Golden Gate Transit (GGT) buses at Marin City and San Rafael for the trip to work, and better coordination or connections with the Larkspur and Sausalito ferries. Connections to regional transit are especially important for visitors coming from outside the Bay Area. Connections to park shuttles were also requested, although currently there is no intersection point between the Stage and the park-sponsored Lighthouse Shuttle during the winter months.

### Routes & Stops

The most requested new route was between Point Reyes and the Petaluma Transit Hub. A route connecting West Marin with Petaluma in Sonoma County would both allow West Marin residents to travel to work in Petaluma, and permit workers who live in less expensive housing in Petaluma to travel to work on dairies, farms, restaurants and lodgings in West Marin.

The second most requested new route was from Point Reyes to Novato, for similar reasons. In addition, some Point Reyes students attend high school in Novato. Related to this, direct service to hospitals in east Marin—Kaiser in Terra Linda, Sutter in Novato, and Marin General in Greenbrae—was also requested, primarily by seniors or their representatives.

The most frequent request for an additional stop was on the mesa in Bolinas. Currently both Route 61 and 62 stop in downtown Bolinas, but the majority of homes, as well as the medical clinic, a childcare center, and the fire station, are on the mesa. The distance between downtown and destinations on the mesa may be too far to walk, particularly for the infirm or those with small children. Another location in Bolinas where a stop was requested is at the Bolinas Stinson Elementary School on the Bolinas-Olema Road. The bus will stop there when flagged, but there is no marker for the stop.

Bus drivers' major concern was the physical configuration of the stops. The Stagecoach started out as a small system and has grown, but the infrastructure has not grown with it. Initially the service used 13-passenger vehicles, but now they are using 30-passenger vehicles and need more pullouts and cutouts. All drivers spoke of the difficulty of stopping in designated stop locations, the lack of a place to park the bus, autos parking in bus stop zones, and having no place to turn the bus around.

## Vehicles

Every group cited the lack of space for bicycles on the bus as a serious problem. On a rural system such as the Stage, bicycles can serve as an extension between the bus and the trip origin or final destination. Combining this with the large number of recreational visitors who do or could use the Stage, the two-bicycle limit per bus becomes a genuine barrier to people using the system. Some riders also complained that the stiff suspension on the Stage buses makes the ride uncomfortable, especially where roads are in disrepair.

## Marketing & Information

People were very aware that an increase in ridership may allow for an increase in Stage service, and valued marketing activities as a way to bring this about. The top marketing request was to increase marketing of the service in general, but especially to recreational users and seniors; both of these groups were seen as underserved and as having great potential for becoming new riders. Marketing ideas varied from information distribution through various media, to training for seniors, to collaborations with local businesses in getting information onto the Internet. Specific marketing measures are covered in Chapter 5.

## Target Stagecoach Markets

Given current and projected ridership, several significant market segments emerged that are most attracted to the Stagecoach service currently and are expected to be important markets in the future.

**Students, particularly high school students,** take the Stage regularly to get to school. Teens of middle and high school age are dependent on getting rides and on public transportation for mobility. Students in the Point Reyes area use Route 68 to travel to and from Drake High School; Drake does not provide any student transportation services. In the south part of the county, students use Route 61 to travel from Stinson Beach to Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. The school does provide limited transportation for these students, so the Stage is used to supplement school bus service. Service to Tomales High School and from Muir Beach to Tam High is not yet offered and was requested.

Youth riders use the Stage on the weekends as well as during the week. Middle school students use the Stage regularly to access entertainment and shopping, and students use the system for travel to local summer programs. Youth riders provide a strong rider base for the service,

especially for Route 68. The basic mobility needs of this group appear to be met adequately with existing service, although the current schedule may prevent students from participating in some after school activities with later end times. Sometimes teens “get stuck” if they miss the last bus, requiring someone to pick them up. One parent made the point that a new state law prohibits teens from driving other teens, making carpooling more difficult.

**Workers** who live in West Marin travel to central Marin (40%), San Francisco (23%), Novato (12%) and southern Marin (11%) to work. Route 61 and Route 68 provide service connecting West Marin with these locations, with the exception of Novato.

Due to the high cost of housing in West Marin, people who work in West Marin either commute from areas with lower-cost housing, like Petaluma (Sonoma County), Solano County, or Novato, or live on the farms where they work. Travel demand projections predict an increase in workers travelling in both directions between West Marin and Petaluma or Novato.

**Seniors** make up a smaller percentage of the West Marin population than in Marin as a whole, and ride the bus in lower than expected numbers. These potential riders might take more advantage of the system if travel training were offered to acquaint them with the Stage system. Destinations for West Marin seniors include Sutter Hospital in Novato, Kaiser Hospital in Terra Linda, and daycare programs in Point Reyes. Many organizations are concerned about access to healthcare for this group, and suggested direct transit service to larger medical facilities in eastern Marin. Marin County seniors will be the focus of a Senior Mobility Action Plan, which will begin in the summer of 2009.

**Recreational users** ride the Stagecoach on the weekends. These riders could benefit from connections to regional bus service, ferries, and the Airporter service in eastern Marin to allow them to get to the Stagecoach directly from San Francisco. Respondents in the business and recreational sectors echoed residents’ concerns that transit services are inadequate for visitors, and that the number of cars in the area due to tourism has negative effects on the quality of life for residents.

There is a strong desire to provide tourists with alternatives to driving to popular beach and park destinations in West Marin. For example, there are several surfing camps in Stinson Beach and Bolinas that operate during the week in the summer. With the majority of participants coming from the Mill Valley area, this group could take the Stagecoach if bus and class times were coordinated. Many respondents suggested integrating services with existing or new shuttle services operated by the National Parks.

**The Latino community** in West Marin lives and works on dairies and farms on the Point Reyes Peninsula, along the east side of Bodega Bay, and in the area between Marshall and Petaluma in the Chileno Valley. Many do not have drivers’ licenses; women in particular are isolated if the only vehicle available to the family is used for work trips. In addition to residents, other Latino workers commute into West Marin from east Marin or from Petaluma. Barriers to using the West Marin Stage include inability to read the schedule, remoteness from routes, apprehension about allowing youth on the bus alone, and work schedules that do not fit with the bus schedule. This group might take more advantage of the Stage if travel training were available.

Each of these groups travels at different times and days. Students commute to school weekday mornings and afternoons from fall through spring; workers commute during the same morning hours but later in the day. On weekends when these groups do not travel as much and during the summer when the students are not commuting, recreational visitors replace them on the Stage.

Service adjustments should be made with the underlying goal of supporting the travel requirements of these disparate groups.





# Chapter 4. Ridership & Performance Analysis

This chapter looks at trends for ridership and performance on the Marin Stagecoach for the overall system, and then for each of the three routes.

## Rider Characteristics

Data from onboard surveys provided information on who is riding the Stage, where they are starting and ending their trip, and the trip purpose.

Three quarters of Stagecoach riders live in Marin, and of those, 66% live in West Marin. A surprising share of Stagecoach riders on Route 61 and 68 are “reverse commuters” using the service to travel to West Marin in the morning and back into central and eastern Marin in the afternoon. On the weekdays when ride checks were done, 55% of the passengers on the first Route 61 trip were westbound. Similarly, on the first Route 68 roundtrip, excluding students getting off at Drake High School, 75% of passengers on the roundtrip were westbound.

Ridership is very different on weekends than during the week. While 85% of weekday riders live in Marin, less than 70% of weekend riders are West Marin residents, as recreational riders take advantage of the system. This recreational ridership benefits the residents of West Marin significantly, since it reduces the impacts of large numbers of visitor autos in terms of traffic congestion, noise, air pollution, and availability of parking.

The two reasons cited most frequently for using the Stagecoach are that no car is available, and to improve the environment. If the Stagecoach service were not available, almost half the riders would have no transportation alternative, while others would bicycle, walk, or hitchhike.

Most riders walked to and from the bus stop, with some transferring from other services in eastern Marin. Low-density residential areas make getting from home to the bus stop and back difficult. Residents who cannot drive are often isolated and cut off from the wider community.

Onboard surveys showed that while two-thirds of Stagecoach riders are adults of working age, students, aged 17 and younger make up more than a quarter (26%) of Stagecoach riders. This is disproportionately high for the number of students in the population and is particularly high for a transit system. High school students comprise a sizable proportion of the ridership on both Route 61 and Route 68.

## Trip Origins, Destinations, and Travel Patterns

Based on ride check data, interviews, and other public input, these specific places were identified as important origins and destinations for West Marin residents, including both Stage riders and non-riders.

- Within Marin County: Sausalito, Mill Valley, San Rafael, Novato, Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Olema, Woodacre, Lagunitas, Point Reyes, Point Reyes Station and Inverness.
- Petaluma (Sonoma County), particularly the Transit Center.
- Recreational areas at Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Muir Woods National Monument, Point Reyes National Seashore beaches and lighthouse, and Tomales Bay State Park.

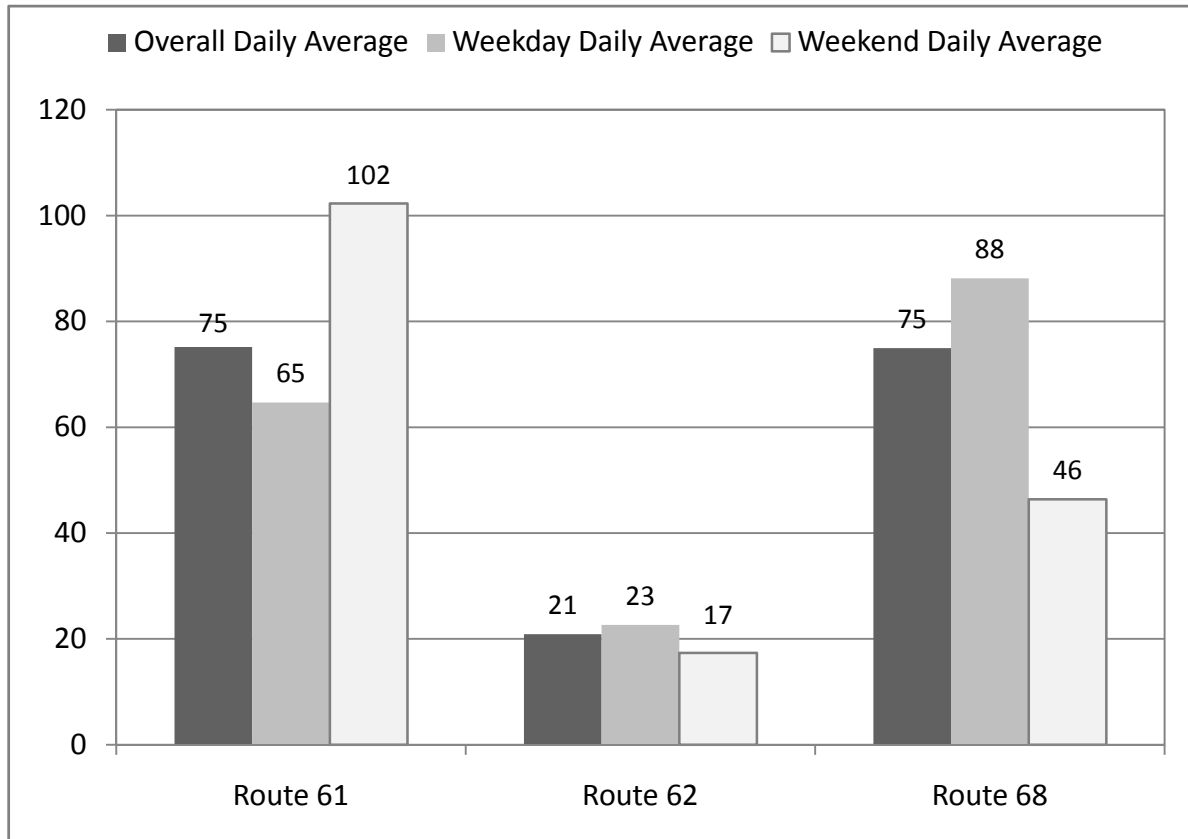
MARIN TRANSIT

- Hospitals in Greenbrae, Terra Linda and Petaluma; the Point Reyes Clinic; the Marin County HHS Dental Clinic on Fourth Street in San Rafael; and Coastal Health Alliance Clinics in Bolinas, Stinson Beach, and Point Reyes Station.
- Shopping malls in Corte Madera and San Rafael, and United Market.
- Connecting to Golden Gate Transit at San Rafael and the Sausalito Ferry.
- San Francisco and the airport.
- The Coast Guard Training Center at Two Rock and Tomales High School were cited as important origins and destinations, as well as the Marshall Store (in the town of Marshall) and Tomales Bay State Park. The northern end of West Marin is underserved, since there is no public transit north of Point Reyes.

## **Weekday and Weekend Travel**

Certain factors varied significantly between weekday riders and weekend riders. During the week, 85% of riders live within Marin County, with more than 60% using the service to go to work or to school. On the weekends, fewer than 70% live in Marin, with 21% coming to Marin from San Francisco. Those commuting for work or school account for the majority of riders during the week, and only 2% of trips connect to outside Marin County. By comparison, 17% of riders connect outside the county on weekends, and 55% of weekend trips are for recreational purposes. This is without any focused marketing effort to recreational users in the Bay Area.

Ridership on the two most used routes, the South 61 and the North 68, varies significantly between weekdays and weekends. During 2008, the South Route 61 had more passengers on the weekends than during the week, while the 68 carries more of its passengers, many of them students, during the week. Ridership on the Coastal 63 is fairly even across weekdays and Saturdays. The following figure shows the daily average ridership for all of 2008, for weekdays and for weekends, by route.

**Figure 4-1 Average Daily Ridership by Weekday and Weekend, 2008**

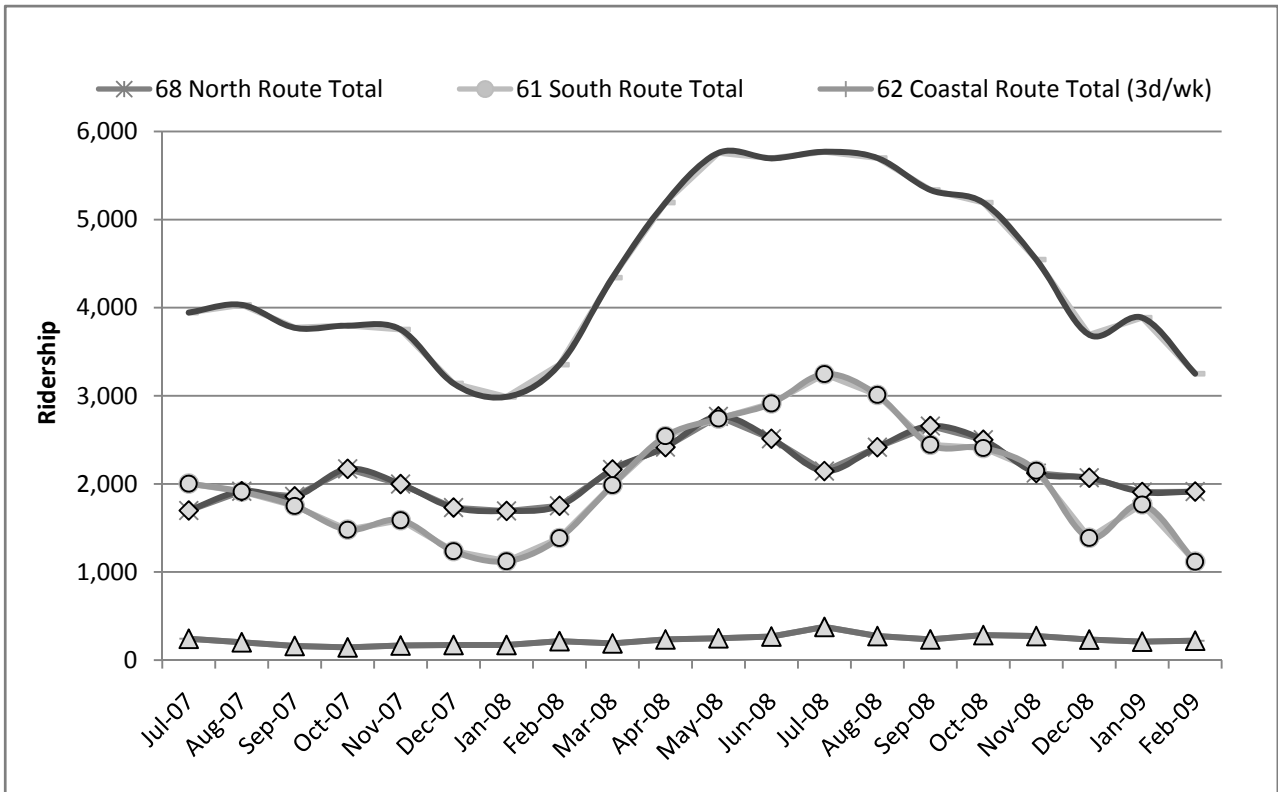
Data: Marin Transit. Averages are approximate and are calculated based on 21 weekday service days and 9 weekend service days per month for the 61 and 68; and 8 weekdays and 4 weekend days per month for Route 62.

## Total System Ridership

West Marin Stagecoach ridership has grown significantly in the past year, with a significant increase throughout the spring and summer (see Figure 4-2). Weekend usage has grown steadily since March 2008 when additional service was added to the schedule. Total monthly ridership was highest in June 2008 with 5,758 riders, and lowest in February 2008 with 2,900 riders.

Ridership varies by season and by route, as shown below. Ridership on Route 68 is steady during the school year when it is used by high school students travelling between West Marin and Fairfax. May ridership is the highest, since school is still in session and recreational riders begin to take this route as well; it then falls during the summer when high school students are not commuting. At the same time, ridership increases on Route 61, since it is the closest connection between San Francisco and recreational sites on the Marin coast.

**Figure 4-2 Total Stagecoach Ridership July 2007 to February 2009**



## On-Time Performance

A route is considered “on time” if it arrives at and departs from all designated time points no later than five minutes after the scheduled time and does not leave any time point prior to the scheduled departure time.<sup>10</sup>

Recent changes and an emphasis on reliability, along with incentives and penalties attached to performance, have led to significant improvements for on-time reliability in the past year. In FY 2007-2008, each route consistently had a greater than 95% on-time performance rate, with all routes performing at better than 97.5% on-time in the fourth quarter. This reliability is exceptional, especially for long routes that are often in single-lane, hilly roads.

## System Performance

Six key performance indicators were identified and evaluated for Stagecoach fixed-route service. Year-to-year comparison data for the past two fiscal years are presented below for the following performance indicators:

- Passengers per revenue hour
- Operating cost per revenue hour
- Operating cost per passenger
- Subsidy per passenger

<sup>10</sup> Marin Transit Service Performance Standards, 2008

- Average fare per passenger
- Farebox recovery ratio

See Figure 4-3 for a year-over-year comparison of these factors.

### Annual Ridership and Passengers per Revenue Hour

Fixed-route ridership grew dramatically in FY 2007-08. While some of this growth can be attributed to the addition of the Coastal Route, the increase was far greater than would be expected solely due to the service increase. Between FY 2006-07 and FY 2007-08 there was a 63% growth in fixed-route ridership, while there was only a 24% increase in fixed-route service miles and a 24% increase in fixed-route service hours.

All three routes experienced an increase of over 50% in annual passenger trips. Of all of West Marin's fixed routes, North Route 68 had the highest ridership, with nearly 25,000 passenger trips in FY 2007-2008. Coastal Route 62, a newer service, provided only about 2,400 passenger trips in FY 2007-2008.

Because fixed-route ridership growth outpaced increases in service hours, productivity—as measured in the number of passengers per revenue hour—increased between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008. Comparing FY 2007-2008 with the prior fiscal year, there was a 32% increase in passengers per service hour overall. Routes 68 and 61 increased the number of passengers per revenue hour by over 40%. Route 68 was the most productive route as measured by passengers per revenue service hour, carrying more than six passengers per hour. Despite these improvements in ridership and productivity, the Coastal Route remains a poor performer, carrying fewer than two passengers per revenue service hour.

**Figure 4-3 Ridership & Productivity by Route, FY06 – FY08**

Route	Annual Passenger Trips			Productivity (Passengers per Revenue Hour)		
	FY 2006-2007	FY 2007-2008	% Change	FY 2006-2007	FY 2007-2008	% Change
68 - North Route	16,139	24,681	52.9%	4.31	6.13	42.2%
61 - South Route	13,761	22,604	64.3%	3.72	5.25	41.1%
62 - Coastal Route	542	2,422	NA*	1.63	1.87	14.7%

Source: West Marin Stagecoach Operating Data FY 2007-08

\* 62- Coastal Route began in April 2007.

### Operating Costs and Fare Revenues

Operating costs increased by approximately 47% between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008, rising from approximately \$380,000 to about \$561,000. Costs increased at a faster rate than both service miles and service hours in FY 2007-2008. However, average gasoline prices rose 21% from FY 2007 to FY 2008<sup>11</sup>. With a 24% increase in service miles, the increase in the cost of gas is a large contributor to the increase in operating costs.

<sup>11</sup> Energy Information Administration, [http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/mg\\_tt\\_usw.htm](http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/mg_tt_usw.htm) July 1 to June 30 FY

As would be expected with increasing ridership, fare box revenue grew substantially (62%) between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008. The fare box recovery ratio also increased, from 9.6% to 10.6%.

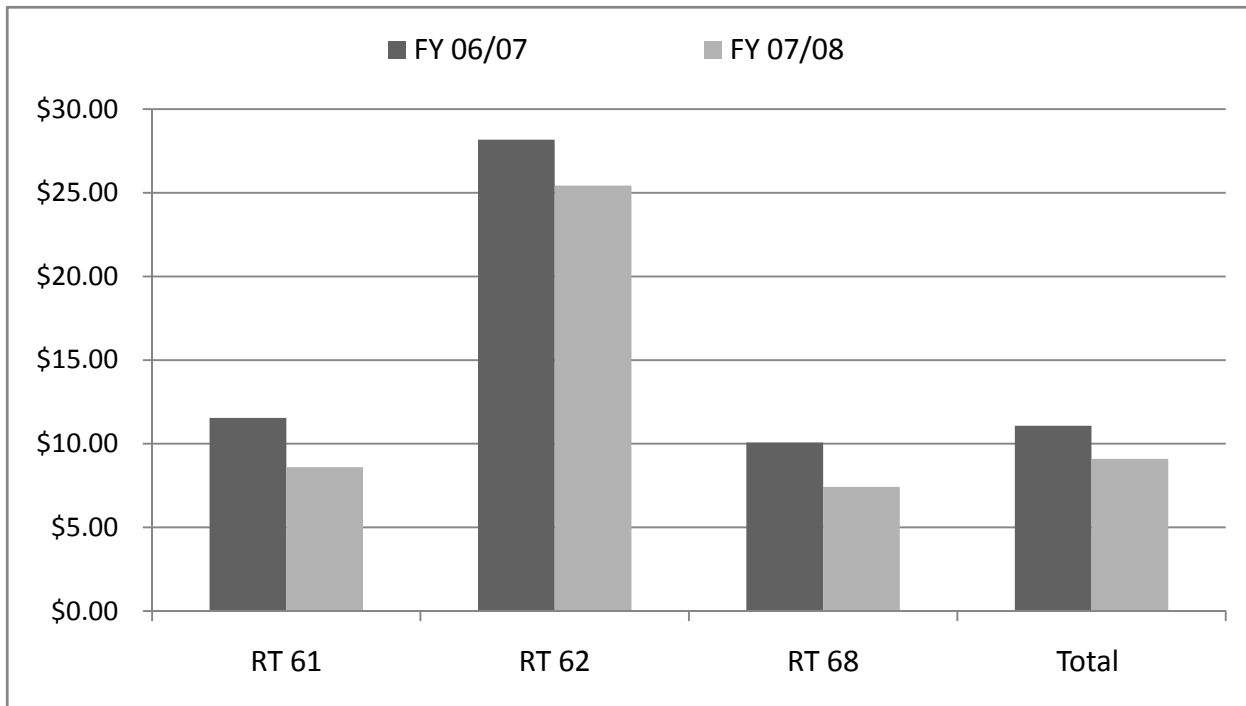
Operating costs grew at a faster pace than revenue hours between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008. As a result, operating cost per revenue hour increased by 19% during this period.

### Operating Cost per Passenger and Subsidy per Passenger

Despite the increases in fixed-route costs that took place between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008, cost per passenger actually declined due to the dramatic increase in ridership during this period. In FY 2007-2008, the operating cost per passenger was \$11.29, compared to \$12.51 in FY 2006-2007, nearly a 10% decrease.

The overall subsidy per passenger on the Stagecoach decreased by nearly 11% between FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008, from \$11.31 to \$10.09. This was again primarily due to significant increases in ridership and fare revenue. This varies greatly by route as it is directly related to the number of passengers; the following figure shows subsidy per passenger for the three routes, for FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008.

**Figure 4-4 Subsidy per Passenger by Route, FY 2006 - 2008**



Following is a table summarizing the data discussed above.

**Figure 4-5 Stagecoach Operating Statistics, FY 2006 - 2008**

	FY 2006-2007 Actual	FY 2007-2008 Actual	Percent Change
<b>Fixed Route Service</b>			
Passengers	30,442	49,707	63.3%
Operating Cost	\$380,966	\$561,079	47.3%
Farebox Revenue	\$36,641	\$59,447	62.2%
Revenue Hours	7,776	9,621	23.7%
Revenue Miles	139,751	173,779	24.3%
Passengers/Revenue Hour	3.9	5.2	32.0%
Operating Cost/Revenue Hour	\$48.99	\$58.32	19.0%
Operating Cost/Passenger	\$12.51	\$11.29	-9.8%
Subsidy/Passenger	\$11.31	\$10.09	-10.8%
Average Fare/Passenger	\$1.20	\$1.20	-0.6%
Farebox Recovery Ratio	9.6%	10.6%	10.2%

## Route-by-Route Analysis

The following section details operating and performance data for each of the West Marin Stagecoach routes. The information presented in this section is based on findings from onboard ride checks conducted in November 2008, supplemented by historical data provided by Marin Transit.

In order to accurately gauge boarding patterns and on-time performance, Nelson\Nygaard performed a ride check on all three of West Marin Stagecoach fixed routes, covering weekday and weekend trips. Surveyors rode each trip one time, recording passenger activity at all bus stops, as well as the arrival and departure time at time points noted in the printed schedule. Data collection was performed from November 2nd through November 9th excluding Monday, Friday and Tuesday (Election Day). This is well out of the peak recreational season, although some recreational riders use the system on the weekends all year. Assumptions regarding peak ridership are based on data from Marin Transit from July 2007 through February 2009.

For detailed route maps showing stop-specific boardings for each route on a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday, see the Supplemental Appendix.

### Route 61 – South Route

The South Route 61 travels seven days a week from downtown Bolinas through Stinson Beach with a short detour to Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley en route to Marin City, with four roundtrips per day on weekdays. On the weekends from early March through early December, the bus originating in Bolinas completes three roundtrips, while an additional bus starts in Marin City and completes four roundtrips, for a total of seven roundtrips on Saturdays and Sundays. This service has been added in order to better serve weekend tourists and others. Weekday service begins at approximately 7:00 AM and ends at 8:00 PM and weekend service runs from 8:40 AM to 8:00 PM.

Ridership is higher on the weekends than during the week, particularly in the summer, primarily because this route is used by recreational travelers from the urbanized parts of Marin and from San Francisco to get to the many recreational activities along this route.

### Boarding Activity

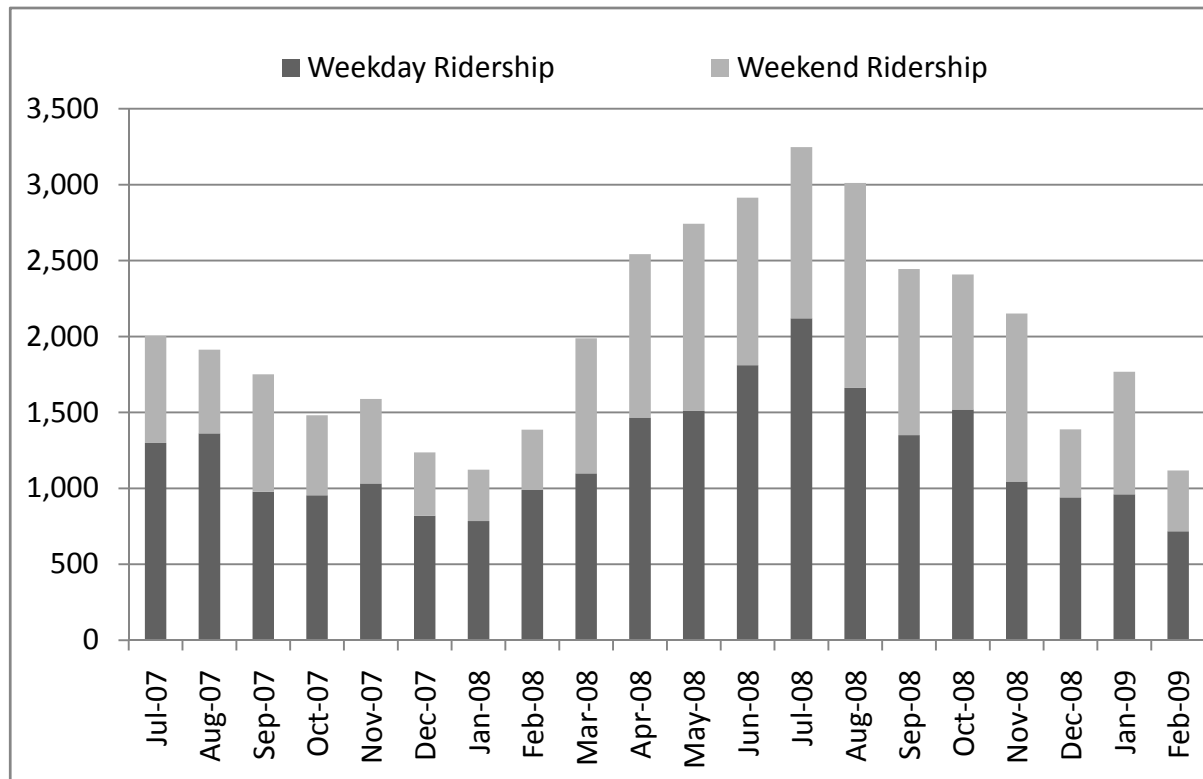
During the weekday ride check, a total of 63 weekday passenger boardings were recorded on Route 61. Boarding activity was heaviest during the third run of the day (2:45 PM), which carries students returning from school, followed by the first run of the day (6:55 AM). Boarding dropped off significantly during the second and last run of the day when student activity is lightest. Saturday boarding activity was lower than on weekdays, with 14 boardings recorded. Sunday boardings were higher than on Saturday, with nearly 20 boardings occurring during the second run of the day at 2:10 PM.

### Stop Activity

The stops with the highest number of passengers boarding and alighting on Eastbound Route 61 were Marin City, Stinson Beach, and Bolinas Community Center. The top boarding and alighting locations for the Westbound Route 61 were Bolinas Community Center, Mill Valley Tam Junction, and Stinson Beach.

Stop activity for the westbound bus service varied somewhat on the weekend service. On Sunday, the major stop activity took place at Bolinas, Audubon Canyon Ranch, and TAM High. Weekend stop activity on the eastbound bus was similar to weekday activity, with Marin City and Stinson Beach having the highest number of passengers boarding and alighting.

**Figure 4-6 South Route 61 & 61A Ridership, July 2007- February 2009**





## Route 61A – South Route Weekends

Route 61A is the same as the 61, except that it begins its first trip in Marin City heading west to Bolinas, crisscrossing Route 61. It provides additional transportation from Marin City to Stinson Beach and Bolinas on weekends and is frequented by both recreational riders and workers.

### Boarding Activity

A total of 39 Saturday passenger boardings were recorded on the Saturday ride check. Boarding activity was heaviest during the first run of the day (8:40 AM) with 13 boardings. The second and third run remained steady with 10 boardings each. Boarding dropped off significantly during the last run of the day at 5:10 PM, with only six passenger boardings. Route 61A had nearly three times as many Saturday passenger boardings as Route 61.

On Sunday, a total of 51 passenger boardings were recorded on Route 61A. The majority of boardings occurred during the third run of the day at 2:05 PM, with 19 passenger boardings. Boardings on the last run of the day dropped significantly to only two passenger boardings. Sunday ridership on Route 61A also surpassed that on Route 61.

### Stop Activity

The stops with the highest number of passengers boarding and alighting on Eastbound Route 61A were the two end stops, Marin City and Bolinas, as well as Stinson Beach. Since this route only runs on the weekends, people use it to access the beach from Marin City to Stinson Beach or Bolinas.

## Route 62 – Coastal Route

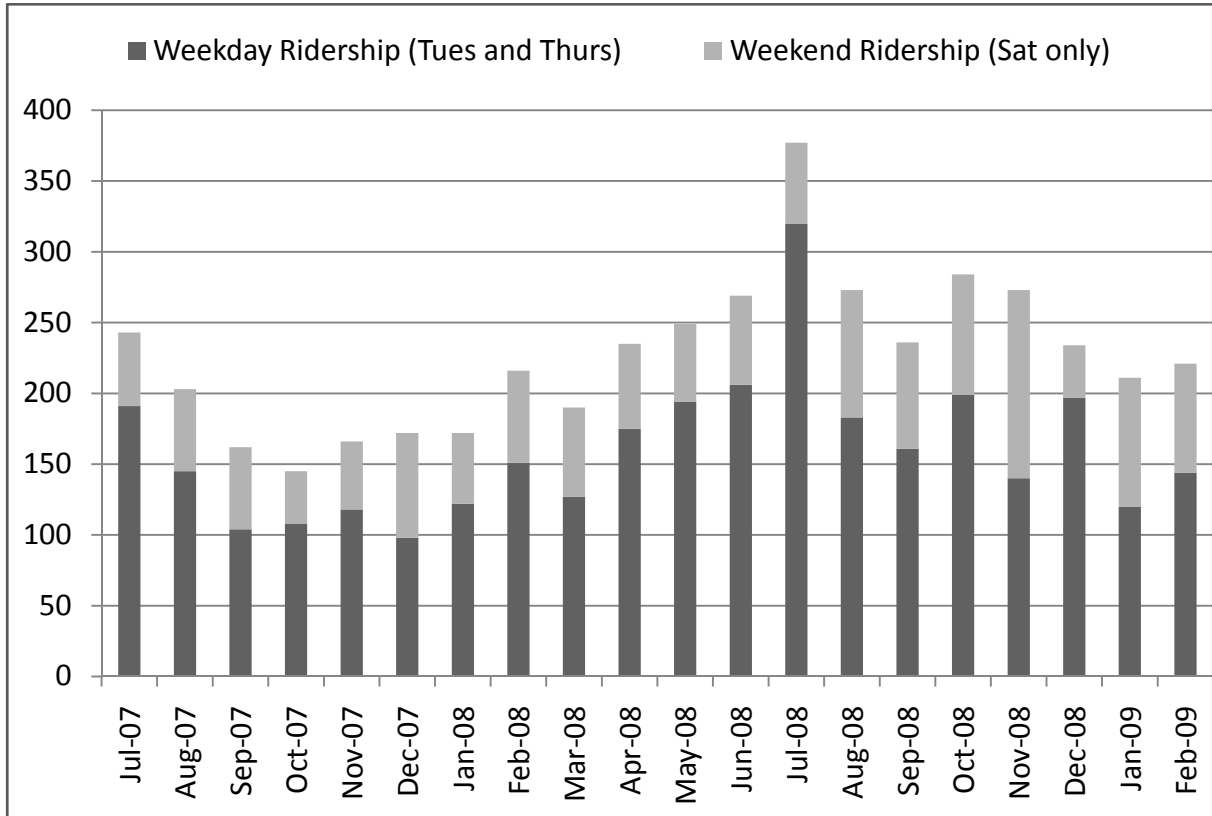
This route is intended to provide a lifeline service connecting Bolinas residents with medical, financial, and other services in Point Reyes Station that are not available in Bolinas. In addition, it is the connection point to Route 68 to San Rafael. Route 62 serves different markets and needs, depending on the time of year and day of the week. During the week and in the winter, ridership is primarily residents commuting to work and shopping. During the summer and on the weekends, Route 62 is also used by recreational users because it connects significant recreational sites—Stinson Beach, Audubon Canyon Ranch, and Point Reyes National Seashore—to the towns of Olema and Point Reyes Station.

The Coastal Route travels north on Highway 1 between Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Olema and Point Reyes Station. One trip on Route 62 connects with Route 68, allowing travel to Lagunitas, Fairfax, San Anselmo, and San Rafael. Three northbound and southbound trips run on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 8AM to 5 PM.

The Coastal Route serves the most remote parts of West Marin. Service was started in April of 2007. It has the lowest ridership of the three Stage routes, although the number of passengers has steadily increased. For FY 2007-2008, (July 2007 through June 2008) Route 62 productivity was 1.9 passengers per hour. Based on a 9-hour service day, for the first six months of the current fiscal year (July 2008 through February 2009), the route averaged 2.4 passengers per hour. The highest productivity was in July 2008, with an overall average of 3.4 passengers per hour, a 40% increase over the previous month. For weekdays only in July 2008, the Route 62 carried an average of 4.4 passengers per hour. Marin Transit's performance standard for rural transit is four passengers per hour.

The growth in passengers per hour is primarily due to the addition of the extension of the Coastal Route to San Rafael Transit Center, which essentially added a fifth roundtrip onto the North Route. The subsidy per passenger on the Coastal Route is currently \$25.26 per trip.

**Figure 4-7 Coastal Route 62 Ridership, July 2007 - February 2009**



### Boarding Activity

Weekday boarding activity on Route 62 was heaviest during the second run of the day (10:15 AM), followed by the first run of the day (8:15 AM). Ridership dropped off significantly during the last run of the day at 3:15 PM. On Saturday, the majority of boardings occurred during the second run of the day at 10:15 AM.

### Stop Activity

The stops with the highest number of passengers boarding and alighting on the Coastal Route 62 were Point Reyes Downtown and Stinson Beach Downtown, followed by Bolinas. The southbound bus saw slightly less activity than the northbound bus. The top boarding and alighting locations for the southbound Route 62 were Bolinas and Point Reyes Downtown. Stop activity was similar for Saturday service, with slightly more activity at the Olema stop.

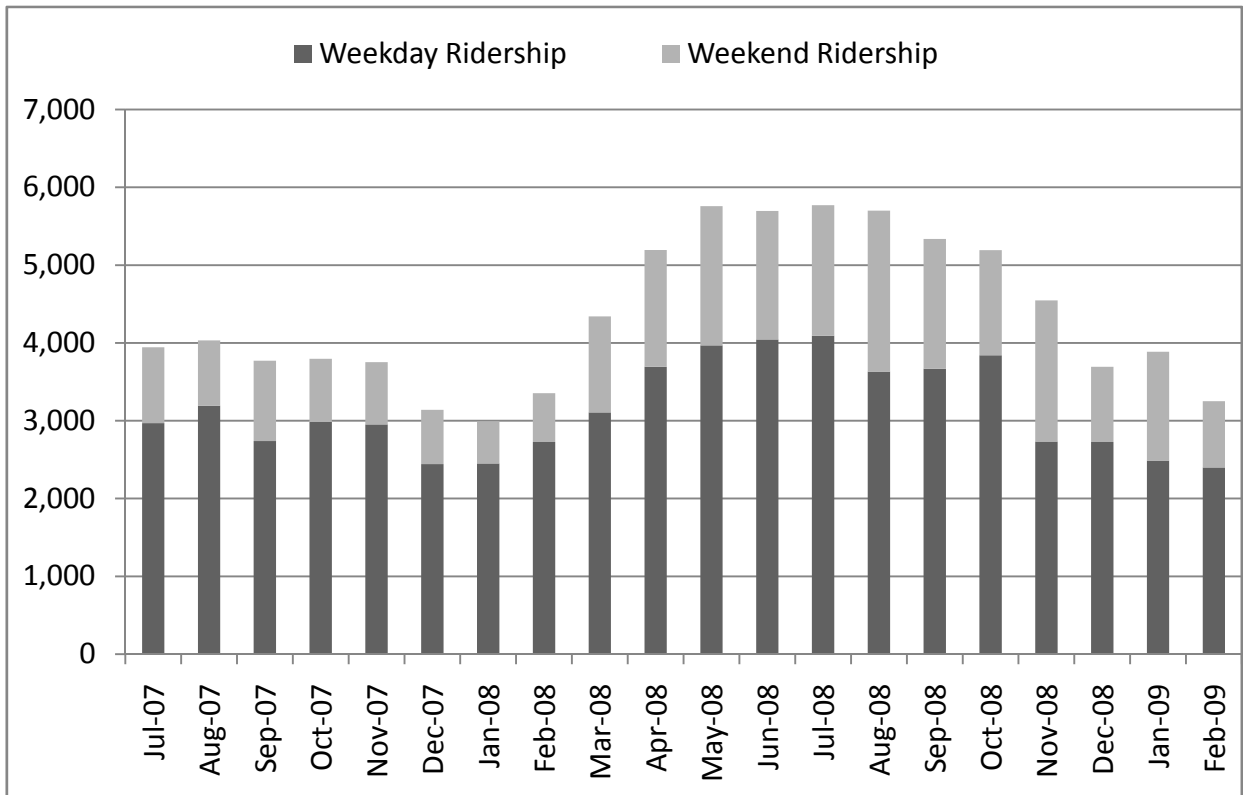
### Route 68 – North Route

North Route 68 travels between Inverness and San Rafael Transit Center via Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with service to Point Reyes National Seashore Bear Valley Visitor Center, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, San Geronimo Valley and Fairfax. Route 68 operates seven days per week. Four eastbound and westbound trips run daily, with an extra mid-day trip in each direction running

on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Weekday service begins at approximately 6:30 AM and ends at approximately 8:00 PM.

Route 68 had the highest ridership of all three West Marin Stagecoach Routes and was the most productive fixed route, carrying more than six passengers per revenue hour. Ridership was the highest during May through August 2008. The annual ridership for FY 2007-2008 on West Marin Stagecoach Route 68 was 24,681 passengers. Weekend ridership was significantly lower during the summer months when school is not in session and during the winter when weather conditions may make riding transit more challenging.

**Figure 4-8 North Route 68 Ridership, July 2007 - February 2009**



### Boarding Activity

During the weekday ride check, 77 passengers were recorded on Route 68. Boarding activity was heaviest during the first run of the day (6:30 AM) and dropped off significantly during the second run at 9:35 AM. Boardings remained relatively steady between 1:30 PM and 4:50 PM.

Saturday boarding activity was lighter than weekday boarding activity, with boardings typically falling well below fifteen passengers per trip. The Saturday ridership trends were the reverse of the weekday ridership; the fewest boardings took place on the first run and the most boardings occurred during the second run at 9:35 AM. Boarding remained steady at 12 and 14 passengers during the last two runs of the day. Sunday had the lowest daily ridership, with 10 passenger boardings in the first, second, and last run of the day and only five passengers boarding during the third run.

## Stop Activity

The stops with the highest number of passengers boarding and alighting on Eastbound Route 68 were San Rafael Transit Center and Drake High School, followed by San Anselmo Bus Hub and Forest Knolls Post Office. The westbound bus saw less activity overall than the eastbound bus. The top boarding and alighting locations for the westbound Route 68 were Fairfax Downtown, Forest Knolls P.O. and Lagunitas General Store.

Stop activity was similar for weekend service. San Rafael and San Anselmo had the highest boarding and alightings for the eastbound bus and Fairfax and Point Reyes had the highest activity for the westbound bus.

## Bicycles Onboard the Stagecoach

West Marin Stagecoach vehicles are equipped with bicycle racks that can carry two to three bikes. Bringing a bicycle on a bus allows a bicycle to be used at both ends of the journey, and helps cyclists who experience a mechanical failure or unexpected bad weather. It also allows cyclists to pass major barriers, such as tunnels or bridges, where cycling is prohibited or particularly difficult.

In FY 2007-2008, the number of bicycles on Route 68 more than doubled over the previous year. There was also a significant increase of bicycle usage on Route 62.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 4-9 Bicycle Use on West Marin Stagecoach**

Route	Bicycles		Percent Change
	FY 2006-2007	FY 2007-2008	
68 - North Route	213	497	133.3%
61 - South Route	460	522	13.5%
62 - Coastal Route	18	113	N/A

The need to increase bicycle storage was a top request of all rider groups. See Chapter 5 for further exploration of possible solutions.

<sup>12</sup> Service on Route 62 began in April 2007.

# Chapter 5. Key Issues and Transit Service Plan

The focus of the needs assessment is to identify strategies and solutions to address the service gaps and transportation needs presented in Chapter 3. This chapter identifies strategies for the immediate, (12 to 18 months), short, (one to five years) and long term.

## Goals and Objectives

Transit system performance must be measured based on goals and standards that reflect the particular operating environment and values of the community served by the system. Information from other similar systems can provide insight into what should be achievable, but it is important to recognize that the goals and standards established for a transit service reflect the unique values of the area served; for example, while one system may focus entirely on productivity, another may require that all residents be within a certain distance of transit, regardless of the impact on productivity.

The goals and performance measures recommended for the West Marin Stagecoach are designed to focus on improving system productivity and on achieving a sustainable system that meets local mobility needs. These criteria are based on input from stakeholders and a review of existing information about the Stagecoach service, and are intended to reflect the values and opinions of the members of the communities served by the Stagecoach.

### **Goal 1: Provide Transportation for West Marin Residents**

The primary goal of the West Marin Stage is to provide transit for West Marin residents, connecting them with schools, jobs, shopping, medical care, and regional transit. To the extent possible, the Stage should be designed so that West Marin residents can be linked with schools, medical facilities and centers of employment. In addition, transfers should be minimized. This requires an emphasis on timed connections at major transfer hubs.

A secondary goal is to provide linkages between communities within West Marin. Services meeting these goals would not necessarily make connections in central or southern Marin, but rather would link residents in coastal communities with local services, including schools, senior centers, and medical facilities.

Because rural transit services are generally not as cost-effective as transit services in denser urban areas, Stage services may not be as frequent as other Marin Transit routes and may not run on all days or at all times of day. Riders may need to schedule their travel more carefully than in areas with higher population density. However, it is a goal of the Stagecoach to provide basic mobility within West Marin and to provide access to needed services for West Marin residents.

### **Goal 2: Provide a Financially Sustainable Service**

The Stagecoach is relatively unique in that it has a dedicated funding source from sales tax revenues. However, it is important that the system be planned conservatively to ensure that implemented services can be sustained over time. Transit operations face difficult choices in an environment of limited resources. Therefore, where choices need to be made, Stagecoach routes will be designed to maximize productivity—in other words, to provide the most service in the areas where it will be most used. This may mean not providing service to places where demand does not justify it.

Marin Transit remains committed to working with the communities of West Marin to explore creative ways of meeting mobility needs that go beyond providing standard fixed-route transit service. Working with community partners, Marin Transit will attempt to provide services tailored to demand.

### **Goal 3: Support Existing Markets While Working to Expand Ridership**

The previous section of this report identified existing markets including students, recreational riders, and lower income workers who already ride the Stage in large numbers. Building on existing ridership is often the best way for transit operators to increase ridership, since it is generally easier to get someone who already uses transit for some trips to use the system for more of their trips than it is to convince someone who has rejected transit altogether to use it regularly. Therefore, a primary goal of the Stagecoach service is to enhance service to groups that are already predisposed to use the service.

A secondary goal of the Stagecoach is to increase its ridership base by providing better service and/or better information to groups that are not yet using, or are underutilizing, the service. This could include seniors, who are underrepresented in current ridership, recreational users who plan their trips in advance using Internet resources, and people travelling to West Marin for organized special events such as Coastal Cleanup Day.

### **Goal 4: Focus on Productivity Before Service Expansion**

A primary goal of the Stagecoach is to increase productivity by fully utilizing existing infrastructure before adding new or speculative service. Marin Transit's performance standard for rural transit is four passengers per hour, which is being met by two of the three routes. Stakeholder interviews and focus groups suggest that even within the communities that are well served by the Stage, there is a general lack of awareness about the service, including what level of service is offered and how to access it. Better information and information integrated with other sources, such as National Park Service (NPS) information for Point Reyes, visitor bureau promotions, and worksite and school information sites, could increase ridership without significant investment in new services. As funding is available, new services will be added over time to address demonstrated needs.

## **Service Plan**

This section of the report proposes service and operations changes, starting with changes affecting overall service, followed by service strategies and changes organized by community, based on the area served by each of the three Stage routes. Areas not currently served by the Stage but that may require service in the future are also discussed. It concludes with recommendations for marketing and partnership opportunities intended to increase ridership.

## General System Enhancements

Recommendations in this section are not specific to any route but affect overall service.

### Accessing the Stagecoach by Bicycle

Bicycle access is an increasingly important consideration for Stage routes. Both recreational travelers and local riders use bikes to access Stage routes and at the end of their trips on the Stage. In West Marin, Stage routes stay on the main roads, and there can be quite a distance from the rider's origin to the bus stop and from the bus stop to their final destination. In rural areas, bicycles can act as an extension of transit service, solving the "last mile" problem, and making transit use usable for those who otherwise could not take advantage of it.

The vehicles currently used by the Stagecoach carry up to two bicycles. The preferred location for bicycle storage is on the front end of the vehicle; this allows the driver to see if someone is loading or unloading a bicycle and whether a bicycle has come loose from its rack, and discourages theft.

However, adding more bicycles to the front of the vehicle presents some potential difficulties. A larger rack will extend the length of the bus, which is problematic for the South Route, which travels winding roads over Mount Tamalpais. Racks that carry three bicycles are available, but the manufacturer, Sportworks<sup>13</sup> in Woodinville, WA, does not recommend their use on "cutaway" vehicles. This is due to the narrower width of the vehicle, which causes the rider to enter the traffic lane to mount their bike on the rack. Further, the stiffer suspension on these vehicles causes the racks to deteriorate faster. Due to the configuration of the roads and terrain, Stagecoach vehicles are narrower than standard transit buses.

Sportworks also manufactures bicycle trailers (12- and 16-bike capacity) and bicycle mounts ("interlocks") for inside buses. Inside racks require removal of some seats at the front of the bus to allow proper securement of a few bicycles. These and other bike securement methods should also be considered as biking increases.

Even with increased bike capacity onboard, there will always be the possibility that bike racks will be full. Another way of managing bicycles onboard is to reduce the need to bring the bicycle onto the bus, by enabling riders to leave their bike at a stop, or to rent or "bikeshare" a bike at their destination. Providing secure bike parking at bus stops allows riders who do not need to use their bikes on both ends of a trip to feel comfortable about leaving their bike behind. Secure bike parking could be provided at selected stops in partnership with local communities in West Marin. Bike storage, bike rental, and bike repair could be offered if space is available at the Marin City and San Rafael Transit Centers. Marin Transit should explore partnership opportunities with the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (see Partnerships below) to identify opportunities to offer a bike station at transfer hubs and should include bike parking at selected West Marin stops.

Bike sharing is becoming more popular, especially in urban areas, where a rider can pick up and use a bike for a short period, and then leave it at another bike-sharing station. This would allow recreational visitors to come to West Marin on the Stage, and then get a bike while they are here, without the need to bring it on the Stage. With bike-sharing facilities at Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Olema, and Point Reyes, people could ride up the coast and then leave the bike at another bikeshare facility and take the Stagecoach.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.bicycleracks.com](http://www.bicycleracks.com)

In addition, drivers and residents of Bolinas said that many passengers want to bring surfboards and boogie boards as well, particularly on summer weekends. These boards are not allowed inside Stage vehicles for safety reasons. Storage under the current vehicles is limited to items less than five feet in length. When new vehicles are purchased, Marin Transit should research possible options for carrying larger items.

In summary, expanding the capacity to carry bicycles on the Stage is important, and Marin Transit should continue to explore the feasibility of options, including larger front-end racks, inside securement, and trailers. At the same time, programs and partnerships should be explored to create safe, secure bike parking at major stops to encourage people to use bikes to get to the bus without bringing them onto the vehicle.

## Vehicle Improvements

Currently, about half of the West Marin Stagecoach vehicles are provided by the contractor. Only a portion of the current fleet is owned by Marin Transit. That will change soon when Marin Transit utilizes Economic Stimulus funds to purchase additional vehicles for the Stage. Marin Transit will order the vehicles off of a State contract. Most small operators order vehicles from a larger State procurement. To qualify for stimulus funds the agency must move quickly to purchase the vehicles and avoid a drawn out individual procurement. At the same time, Marin Transit is constrained by the availability of vehicles that meet the operating requirements for the Stage service.

To the extent that Marin Transit has flexibility in specifying the type of vehicle to be purchased, they should attempt to procure a vehicle that is quieter and more comfortable than the current small buses, which are “body on chassis” vehicles that tend to be noisy and do not have the suspension required to operate over the very difficult roads that the Stage covers, especially through Samuel P. Taylor Park. While heavier duty vehicles may not be appropriate for that road, passengers do complain that the bus ride is bumpy, noisy, and uncomfortable in the current vehicle. This issue may be somewhat mitigated by ongoing and planned road repairs for the SP Taylor Park section of Sir Frances Drake Boulevard.

West Marin residents are also very aware of environmental concerns, and would be supportive of a hybrid or alternative fuel vehicle. It is unlikely that an alternative fuel vehicle will be available from the State procurement that will happen this year, but future procurements should consider emerging technologies and look for a clean fuel solution if the vehicles meet the operating requirements of the Stagecoach routes. For example, on the South Route, the engine on a hybrid vehicle would have to be much larger and more durable than designed, as much of the route will require use of the engine due to the hilly terrain.

Hybrid cutaway buses are not currently available, although Marin Transit is participating in a special joint procurement of the first production. These will be suitable for community shuttle service, but not for Stage service. Marin Transit is committed to hybrid technology if it is appropriate to the operational requirements of a service and sufficient capital funds are available to cover the cost.

Another suggested improvement was better communication between the buses. This will help when people are trying to make transfers, or if buses are running off schedule. Several ideas were brought up, including short-range radios. Communications will improve substantially if and when a cell tower is installed in the Stinson area. Marin Transit is working with partner agencies on possible communications network alternatives.



Recommendations for improved vehicles are considered longer-term. The upcoming procurement will be done with federal stimulus funding, which requires a near term commitment of funds.

## **Fare Media**

West Marin Stagecoach offers a variety of fare options for passengers including one-way cash fares, discount ticket books, youth passes, and transfers. In 2008, Marin Transit's board adopted a policy to expand fare media to include daily, weekly, and monthly passes, which will be implemented during the summer of 2009. These passes will simplify fare payment for regular passengers, and will encourage visitors to take transit because they can pay once and then get on and off the Stage without paying an additional fare.

Another fare payment method used on many transportation systems in the Bay Area is TransLink, an electronic fare payment system linked to a bank account or credit card. This system is being adopted by an ever-greater number of agencies, and is currently accepted on Marin Transit's services operated by Golden Gate Transit. If the installation of TransLink on Marin Transit vehicles is physically and financially feasible, adopting this system on the West Marin Stage would make Stage travel easier for Bay Area residents already familiar with and using the TransLink system.

## **Bus Stop Improvements**

As the system has grown, the infrastructure to support it has not kept pace. There are many Stage stop locations that lack a place for the bus to stop out of traffic, space to turn around, signage, or shelters and safe and comfortable places to wait. Locations where stops are particularly difficult are at SP Taylor Park (westbound), downtown Stinson Beach, and downtown Point Reyes. Marin Transit could start the process of a system-wide upgrade through an inventory of current bus stops for adequate space free of parked cars, signage, information, shelter, and accessibility. Cataloging and ranking improvements would help to prioritize capital improvements, as some stop improvements will require substantial funding and cooperation with other agencies. The inventory might include those locations most commonly used as flag stops, as well as en route locations where stops have been requested in order to get them in the queue for formalization.

In addition, outreach participants expressed serious concerns about the safety of transferring from the Stage at Marin City, since there have been reports of increased crime at that location. Seniors cited this as a reason not to use the Stage at all. While this is not Marin Transit's responsibility, it is in the agency's interest to push for increased crime-reduction measures at this stop in order to maintain and increase ridership to this major transfer point to local and regional transit services.

## Service Enhancements by Route/Area

The following section looks at each of the areas served by the three existing routes and makes specific recommendations for service changes to support future direction of the service. Areas that do not currently have service but that may be studied for future transit service are also discussed. Please refer to Chapter 1 for a map of the routes and Chapter 4 for a description of current service for each route.

### South Route 61 – Bolinas to Marin City

The following service requests were made by stakeholders and members of the public during outreach activities.

- Greater frequency of service, particularly increased frequency during the summer weekends, to alleviate crowding between Stinson Beach and Mount Tam.
- Earlier departures from Bolinas (6, 7, 8, 9 AM) and arrivals later in the evening (6, 7, and 8 PM) for better connections to GGT.
- Later service hours to support students participating in late afternoon afterschool activities in Mill Valley; stakeholders indicated that service should be provided until 5:30 PM and even later to encourage evening recreational activities.
- Add a stop on the Bolinas Mesa.
- Serve the Bolinas-Stinson Beach School by placing a formal stop at this location and by adjusting the schedule to meet the end of the school day.
- Extend Route 61 through Marin City to the Sausalito Ferry.

### Service Vision & Recommendations

The South Route 61 connects the remote communities of Bolinas and Stinson Beach through Mt. Tamalpais State Park to Marin City, the southern transit hub and connecting point for regional transit in Marin. This route has high ridership on both weekdays when it carries commuters and students, and on weekends when it serves recreational travelers, as well as young people and some workers. Connecting with regional transit is important for both weekday commuters and weekend visitors. By strengthening the connections between this route and regional transit, Route 61 can build ridership from both of these groups. Recommendations for service changes are:

Immediate-term:

- Extend Route 61 service to Sausalito (based on feasibility)

Short-term (one to five years as funding allows):

- Additional “short-turn” service on summer weekends (requires additional operating funds)

Long-term (as funding and partnerships develop):

- Extend Route 61 hours earlier and later (requires additional operating funds)
- Develop a parking management program for Stinson Beach that contributes towards improved transit service
- Improve the bus stop in downtown Stinson Beach

### Extend Route 61 Service to Sausalito

Both West Marin residents and those in the recreational focus group requested better connections from West Marin to regional transportation such as the Sausalito and Larkspur Ferries. One way to accomplish this is to extend the regular Stagecoach Route 61 service to the Sausalito Ferry. This would serve both West Marin residents going to San Francisco on weekdays, and recreational travelers from San Francisco going to West Marin on weekends.

The current route begins in downtown Bolinas at 6:55 AM and ends in Bolinas at 8:00 PM, for a 13-hour shift, with a total of 185 minutes of recovery/layover time built in to the schedule (65 in Marin City and 120 in Bolinas). The distance from the eastern terminus of Route 61 at Marin City to the Sausalito Ferry terminal is a little more than two miles, adding approximately 10 minutes in each direction to the route (based on the GGT Route 10 schedule). For the four trips, this adds 80 minutes of on-the-road time for this route. Accommodating this extension would require some adjustment to the current Route 61 schedule, but may fit within the current span of service, because there would still be 105 minutes of recovery/layover time left in the schedule. With eight minutes of recovery/layover time for each of the four trips, there are 73 minutes left in the schedule for driver breaks, lunch, and refueling.

Following is a conceptual schedule that would allow Route 61 to extend to the Sausalito Ferry without adding a bus and driver to the schedule. This has not been evaluated in terms of work rules and other operational details. This schedule is timed to four ferry departures according to the current schedule (June 2009): 8:20 AM, 12:15 PM, 3:15 PM, and 6:15 PM. The overlap allows transfers between the Stage and the Ferry with approximately 10 minutes of overlap, except for the noon boat, where there are 35 minutes between when the Stage arrives and when it departs. This schedule shortens the span of Route 61 service overall by 15 minutes, from 13 hours 5 minutes to 12 hours 50 minutes. If this or a similar schedule were implemented, no additional buses or service hours would be required.

**Figure 5-1 Conceptual Schedule, Route 61 Extended to Sausalito Ferry**

Bolinas Downtown	Stinson Beach Downtown	Pantoll Ranger Sta.	Mt. Home Inn	Tam Junction	MV -Tam High	Manzanita P&R	Marin City	Arrive Sausalito Ferry
<b>EASTBOUND</b>								
6:45 AM	7:01 AM	7:14 AM	7:23 AM	7:39 AM	7:45 AM	7:55 AM	8:00 AM	8:10 AM
10:15 AM	10:31 AM	10:44 AM	10:53 AM	11:09 AM	11:15 AM	11:25 AM	11:30 AM	11:40 AM
1:45 PM	2:01 PM	2:14 PM	2:23 PM	2:39 PM	2:45 PM	2:55 PM	3:00 PM	3:10 PM
4:40 PM	4:56 PM	5:09 PM	5:18 PM	5:34 PM	5:40 PM	5:50 PM	5:55 PM	6:05 PM
<b>WESTBOUND</b>								
Depart Sausalito Ferry	Marin City	Manzanita P&R	MV - Tam High	Tam Junction	Mt. Home Inn	Pantoll Ranger Sta.	Stinson Beach Downtown	Bolinas Downtown
8:20 AM	8:30 AM	8:35 AM	8:45 AM	8:51 AM	9:07 AM	9:16 AM	9:29 AM	9:45 AM
12:15 PM	12:25 PM	12:35 PM	12:45 PM	12:55 PM	1:05 PM	1:15 PM	1:25 PM	1:35 PM
3:15 PM	3:25 PM	3:35 PM	3:45 PM	3:55 PM	4:05 PM	4:15 PM	4:25 PM	4:35 PM
6:15 PM	6:25 PM	6:35 PM	6:45 PM	6:55 PM	7:05 PM	7:15 PM	7:25 PM	7:35 PM

In addition to meeting the shuttle, there is also a need to ensure that the Stage connects with other local and regional transit services in Marin City. A full operational analysis in cooperation with the Stagecoach operator must be conducted to determine whether these changes can be accommodated without impacts to labor rules, fueling schedules, and operating costs.

### Additional Short-Turn Service on Summer Weekends

During busy summer weekends, Route 61 experiences overflow ridership between Stinson Beach and the Pan Toll Ranger Station. Visitors often choose to drive and park near the Pan Toll Ranger station and then hike or bike into Stinson Beach, intending to ride the bus back up to their cars. Data on Route 61 shows very good ridership on weekends, and Stage drivers have said that the buses are filled to capacity between Stinson Beach and the Pan Toll Ranger Station. Passengers are sometimes passed up, with long waits for the next bus. In addition, the existing buses cannot accommodate all the bicycles passengers attempt to bring on board.

One remedy to this would be to add service between Stinson Beach and the Mountain Home Inn during summer afternoons to accommodate people who hiked or biked down and want to ride back up. Care would have to be taken to effectively communicate to passengers that the bus is a “short-turn” bus, only going halfway to Mill Valley.

The proposed service would run on summer weekends and holidays from May 1 through September 30, for four hours in the afternoons. The departure times would be between the regular scheduled times for the Coastal Route 61. An example schedule, based on 24 minutes of travel time plus a six-minute recovery at each end, is below. This schedule “interleaves” with the current scheduled Route 61 trips from Stinson Beach so that the trips are spaced evenly. On weekend afternoons, the 61 departs from the Stinson Beach Parking Lot at 12:55, 2:15, 4:15, 5:30, and 6:55.

**Figure 5-2 Example Schedule –  
Route 61 Summer Short-Turn Service**

Depart Stinson Beach Parking Lot	Arrive Mountain Home	Depart Mountain Home	Arrive Stinson Beach Parking Lot
1:45 PM	2:09 PM	2:15 PM	2:39 PM
2:45 PM	3:09 PM	3:15 PM	3:39 PM
3:45 PM	4:09 PM	4:15 PM	4:39 PM
5:10 PM	5:34 PM	5:40 PM	6:04 PM

This improvement is estimated to require one additional bus and approximately 194 annual service hours. At FY 2009-2010 service costs, this would require \$12,150 in additional operating funds.

### Extend Route 61 Hours Earlier and Later

Route 61 would better serve both commuters and students with earlier and later service to accommodate trips to work during the week and recreational visitors on the weekends. Extending the span of service slightly earlier and slightly later would enable employees and volunteers to get to work on time, and let early-bird recreational visitors start their trips earlier in the day.

The current Stage schedule has the first bus leaving Bolinas at 6:55 AM, arriving in Marin City at 8:10 AM; this is too late for workers in either east Marin or San Francisco to arrive by an 8:00 AM start time. While Tamalpais Unified School District provides school buses starting in Bolinas, Bolinas residents have requested that service start earlier so that should students miss the school bus, they would have another option that would still get them to school on time. A 6:25 AM departure would arrive at Marin City at 7:40 AM, in time to board Golden Gate Transit for an 8:30 AM arrival in Downtown San Francisco, or to get to school or employment in southern Marin by 8:00 AM, without adding another bus. Marin Transit would need to evaluate the extent to which the Stage competes with or complements the school district's subscription bus service.

The last buses on weekdays leave Bolinas at 5:25 PM, and Marin City at 6:45 PM, probably adequate for commuter needs. On the weekends, the last departure from Bolinas is at 6:30 PM; this may be adequate during most of the year, but later weekend service in the summer might be considered to enable tourists to stay later for an evening meal during the season when the sun does not set until after 8 PM.

In the near-term, Marin Transit could shift the starting times slightly earlier and the last runs slightly later on summer weekends without adding significant service hours. However, even this adjustment will increase costs, as the expansion of the service day will require an additional driver and a road supervisor. Ultimately, expanding hours of service by adding additional trips should be considered, as operating funds become available.

There was also a request from parents of students at the Bolinas Stinson School for Route 61, which leaves downtown Bolinas at 2:45 PM, to leave at 3:00 PM instead. This would allow students to get to the bus stop in time to travel to Mill Valley, where some students attend afterschool activities. Currently students leave their classroom 15 minutes early in order to catch this bus. This would, however, push all the rest of the afternoon trips 15 minutes later, as there are only five minutes scheduled as layover at the ends of the trips for this bus in the current schedule.

### **Parking Management and Transit Service Expansion at Stinson Beach**

Funding for Route 61 service expansion described above is not available in the immediate term. One funding option, which simultaneously reduces auto congestion, would be to engage the community and Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) in determining the feasibility for a program of charging parking fees at Stinson Beach to support additional transit service. Charging for parking would help to manage limited parking supply while supporting transit access goals. With support and collaboration from the GGNRA, the Town of Stinson Beach, and the County, funds generated from parking fees could be used to support additional Stage service, manage traffic, maintain the parking lot, and pay for fee-collecting equipment. Additional transit service provided through this means would in turn generate more farebox revenue.

While charging for parking has proven to be an effective way to reduce auto usage, Stinson Beach residents and business owners have concerns about how this would affect various factors, from visitation numbers to on-street parking management. This suggestion is definitely long-term. None of the necessary discussions have been held, nor has the idea been examined by the GGNRA.

### **Improve the Bus Stop in Downtown Stinson Beach**

The bus stop in downtown Stinson Beach, at the corner of Calle del Mar and Highway 1 (the westbound direction) consist of a bus stop pole and a small flat area. The paved area is currently

used for parking. However, the bus would still not have room to move completely off the road if parking were prohibited in this space.

When the bus stops at this location, it blocks traffic on Highway 1. This can create serious issues with traffic flow on summer weekends, to the degree that some residents have suggested removing the stop altogether. The Stinson Beach stop is busy, convenient to downtown services and directly across the street from the partner eastbound stop. Design and construction of a stop at this location out of the flow of traffic will require engineering in coordination with Caltrans. A retaining wall would most likely have to be built to create space for a shelter and for the bus to stop out of the roadway. It would also result in the loss of two or three parking spaces. Funding for this capital improvement has not yet been determined; thus it is included in the long-term actions.

## **Coastal Route 62 – Bolinas to Point Reyes Station**

Stakeholders and members of the public made the following service requests for Route 62.

- Add a stop on the Bolinas Mesa
- Greater frequency of daily trips to shorten the wait in Point Reyes for a return trip, especially for seniors
- Daily service on the Coastal Route from Bolinas to Point Reyes
- Better coordination of the meets of Route 62 and Route 68 at Olema and Bolinas
- Extend the 62 to Tomales High School at least once in the morning and in the afternoon
- Connect with shuttle services in the National Seashore
- Beach access from the North route (Drake's Beach and others via Inverness)
- Service to the Point Reyes Hostel twice a day

### **Service Vision & Recommendations**

The Coastal Route 62 travels some of the most scenic areas in the country. As described in Chapter 6, building partnerships and implementing marketing recommendations would strengthen the position of the Coastal Route as recreational transit connecting world-class vacation areas. With a focus on recreational users, growth in ridership could provide the financial stability to increase days of service while addressing summer congestion on Highway 1.

In the long-term, the Coastal Route could extend service to recreational areas it does not currently serve, such as Tomales Bay State Park and other points north of Point Reyes. This would also be the logical choice to connect with any transportation sponsored by the Point Reyes National Seashore in the future.

Recommendations to improve Route 62 for both local residents and recreational visitors are:

Immediate Term:

- Provide deviated fixed-route service to the Coastal Health Alliance Clinic on the Bolinas mesa; on-demand available to all riders

Short-term (one to three years as funding allows):

MARIN TRANSIT

- Increase frequency on weekdays by adding a mid-day bus to Route 68 and keeping the Coastal Route in West Marin (requires additional operating funds)
- Add another weekday of service (requires additional operating funds)

Long-term (or as funding and partnerships develop):

- Extend service to the Point Reyes Hostel twice a day, in partnership with the National Seashore
- Continue to increase the number of weekday service days on the route (requires additional operating funds)
- Add service on Sundays to better meet both local and recreational riders, enabling access to shopping, church, and recreation (requires additional operating funds)

### Deviate Service to the Mesa in Bolinas

There was significant support for the Stage to stop on the mesa in Bolinas, particularly at the Coastal Health Alliance Clinic. This is where the bus drivers park during their breaks, although it is not an official stop on the route. This location is well suited as a stop, since it is an important community destination, and there is adequate space to turn the bus around.

Providing regular service to this location presents a problem in that it would create an obligation for Marin Transit to provide paratransit service for most of the mesa, greatly expanding its service area where the roads are too narrow to safely navigate with a Stage bus.

An alternative cost-effective approach would be to allow a route deviation (or “flex route”) to the clinic on the mesa at the advance request of a passenger for Routes 61 and 62. The passenger would have to arrange to be picked up from this location through either calling the West Marin Stagecoach 24 hours in advance, or arranging it with the driver for the return trip. This approach would not require extra vehicles or service hours.

### Increase Frequency / Eliminate the Mid-day Trip to San Rafael

The vehicle on this route currently provides a mid-day Route 68 trip from Point Reyes to San Rafael on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Residents of Bolinas would strongly prefer that Route 62 stay on its regular coastal route, since the mid-day run to San Rafael creates a large gap during the day, with no northbound service between 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM. If the extra mid-day Route 68 trip is added as described below, then the 62 could stay on its own route, providing increased frequency. On weekend service days, the Coastal Route 62 would provide the opportunity to make the mid-day trip to San Rafael. Schedules for Routes 62 and 68 should be coordinated closely for transfers in Point Reyes Station and in Olema. The added frequency would be implemented as funding allows. See the section on improvements to Route 68 for more details.

### Increase Weekday Service Days

Route 62 (Coastal Route) runs on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Residents of Bolinas have requested that this be made 7-day a week service, similar to the other Stagecoach routes. Because of the current low ridership, expanding the three day a week service to seven days is not a high priority, as the additional riders gained by more than doubling the amount of service

would not justify the cost. However, a gradual increase in service days may be possible as funding becomes available.

Because the service runs on only two weekdays, transit-dependent residents find it difficult to get to work on a regular five-day-a-week schedule. An additional weekday would help with this problem. Since people are more likely to take Fridays and Mondays off, and because national holidays fall on Mondays, Wednesdays might be a good choice for the next additional day of Route 62 service.

This improvement would utilize vehicles already in service, and would require approximately 364 annual service hours. At FY 2009-2010 service costs, this would require \$22,850 in additional operating funds.

### Limited Service to Point Reyes Hostel

The Point Reyes Hostel is six miles northwest of the Bear Valley Visitor Center (BVVC) at Point Reyes National Seashore, and is not served by transit. Visitors either drive or take transit to the BVVC and then walk the rest of the way. This limits visitors, especially the young, low-income, or European travelers who rely on transit. The hostel manager has requested service twice a day—once in the morning and once in the late afternoon—both to enable visitors to arrive there without a car, and to provide transportation for those staying at the hostel to other sites such as Point Reyes and Stinson Beach.

Route 68 already serves the Bear Valley Visitor Center, but does not serve the hostel and does not have adequate time in its schedule to make this deviation. However, service to the hostel might be provided by deviating Route 62, which travels 45 minutes in each direction and stops in Olema, a few minutes from the BVVC. The proposed service would detour to the hostel on its way south from Point Reyes Station on the first trip of the day (9:15 AM) and the last trip (4:15 PM). Assuming a 20-mile-per-hour travel speed, travelling the six miles each way plus time to unload and load passengers, would add approximately 20 minutes to the Route 62 schedule. Because the hostel is located well within the Point Reyes National Seashore, this service extension would be done in partnership with the park. The additional cost to extend the service to the hostel would be relatively modest, and would provide a very cost-effective alternative for the park. This improvement would utilize existing vehicles and, depending on the amount of slack time in the schedule, may not extend the span of service.

### Additional Service Days as Demand Warrants

In the very long-term, if the demand from both local residents and recreational visitors grows, service days may continue to be added to Route 62. Once three weekdays are in place, it might make sense to add service on Sunday. The consistent schedule for both weekend days might lead to increased recreational ridership on this route, especially if more aggressive marketing measures and partnerships are pursued. Research into regularly scheduled events on Sundays, such as church services and farmer's markets, as well as connection times with Route 68 in Olema, might inform the initial scheduling of Sunday transit service. The next logical step, should ridership increase sufficiently, would be to add Mondays or Fridays, with the eventual goal of seven-day-a-week service. As noted above, each additional day of service would require \$22,850 in additional operating funds (2009-2010 service costs), and would utilize existing vehicles.



## North Route 68 – Point Reyes to San Rafael

The following service requests were made by stakeholders and members of the public during outreach activities.

- Increased frequency: The travel time between Inverness and San Rafael means that the time between arriving and departing on the next scheduled bus is up to three hours. When combined with the one-hour trip each way, many people, especially seniors, find this is too long to wait for the return trip.
- Earlier departures: Workers using the Stage requested earlier service in both eastbound and westbound directions in the morning to allow workers a full day on the job.
- One Friday or Saturday night per month designated “movie night” with a late return from San Rafael and Fairfax, around 10 PM.

### Service Vision & Recommendations

Route 68 is successfully serving its market, carrying more than 47% of the system’s passengers in 2008, and more than 50% of the Stage’s passengers for the first two months of 2009. Weekday ridership for 2008 averaged slightly over 90 passengers, with a steady student and commuter ridership. There were almost no suggestions or complaints specific to this route except for the desire for more service. Recommendations for this route include:

Immediate-Term:

- Maintain existing service

Short-term (one to three years as funding allows):

- Add a bus on weekdays to add earlier westbound service and increase service frequency for both the 68 and the 62 (requires additional operating funds)

Long-term (or as funding and partnerships develop):

- Continue to define partnership opportunities with the national park and state park systems for connecting recreational services

### Add earlier westbound service and increase service frequency

Increased frequency was the most requested service adjustment for Route 68. On the current schedule, the bus stays in San Rafael for less than an hour—too short a time to complete errands or appointments. The next bus leaves approximately two hours later—a lengthy wait for anyone, but especially daunting for seniors who do not want to be away from home that long. Given that the trip from Point Reyes to San Rafael is close to an hour and fifteen minutes, the start-to-finish roundtrip takes more than five hours. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, this roundtrip is closer to four hours when there is an extra mid-day trip provided by an extension of the Coastal Route 62.

In addition, the ride check showed a significant number of workers commuting on this route from Central Marin into West Marin in the morning. The first departure from San Rafael is at 8:05 AM, arriving in Point Reyes at 9:18 AM, late for those working in restaurants, tourist lodgings, and milk processing plants.

Adding a westbound bus from San Rafael early in the morning on weekdays only would address both of these issues by putting an additional vehicle in service on this route. A 7:00 AM departure from San Rafael would arrive in Point Reyes at 8:26 AM, allowing a reasonable work start time. This bus could then return to San Rafael, not to start west again until 2:00 PM entailing a six-hour split workday. An example schedule is shown below.

**Figure 5-3 Example Schedule – Added Route 68 Service**

Depart San Rafael	Point Reyes Downtown	Arrive Inverness	Depart Inverness	Point Reyes Downtown	Arrive San Rafael
7:00 AM	8:13 AM	8:21 AM	8:30 AM	8:39 AM	9:52 AM
2:00 PM	3:13 PM	3:22 PM	3:30 PM	3:39 PM	4:52 PM

Currently Route 68 works in conjunction with the Coastal Route 62. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, there is a mid-day trip covered by Route 62 continuing on to San Rafael. This extra mid-day Route 68 trip might take the place of the Route 62 mid-day run on those days when Route 62 is operating. If Route 62 operated seven days a week, Monday through Friday, the additional bus on Route 68 would provide the mid-day trip. On Saturday and Sunday, the trip would be provided by Route 62.

This improvement is estimated to require one additional bus and approximately 1440 annual service hours (six hours per day, 240 days). At 2009-2010 service costs, this would require \$90,400 in additional operating funds.

### Connections to Recreational Shuttles

Route 68 currently serves the Bear Valley Visitor's Center at Point Reyes National Seashore. Opportunities to expand marketing of this service are described later in this chapter. However, in addition to joint marketing efforts, ridership on this route would be increased if the service connected with recreation-oriented shuttles provided by the National Seashore, by the state parks, and/or by others interested in moving recreational visitors to their destinations.

The National Park Service operated a summer shuttle from Bear Valley Visitor's Center to Limantour Beach as a pilot project during a portion of the summer season in 2008. While the service was considered marginally successful, the park has not identified funds to continue operations. Connecting services to the Stage would provide for a "car-free" day in the park. Similarly, bike rentals could be provided at the Bear Valley Visitor's Center and/or in Point Reyes Station with maps suggesting routes that recreational riders might consider through West Marin. Stretching the transit system through more localized connections would increase ridership and reduce traffic.

### Service to Muir Beach

In the past, Muir Beach was served by the South Route 61 until the 61 was rerouted to take Panoramic Highway instead of Shoreline Highway. While this change added riders to the Stage, it left Muir Beach without service until the Muir Beach Dial-a-Ride service was added in March 2008. The Dial-a-Ride service operated through June 30, 2009, when it was discontinued due to low ridership. This section explores some possibilities for providing basic mobility service to Muir Beach in the future.

At this time, the only public transportation travelling through Muir Beach is the Muir Woods Shuttle. The Muir Woods Shuttle operates on summer weekends from May through September, travelling from Sausalito via Marin City and Muir Beach to Muir Woods. Currently there is no official bus stop in Muir Beach. Establishing a safe and legal pair of stops (one in each direction) would allow those residents to have relatively frequent service (20-30 minutes) to Marin City and the Sausalito Ferry on shuttle service days. If it were possible to provide a safe and accessible bus stop in Muir Beach, it would allow residents to connect with eastern Marin and regional transit and allow those going to Muir Woods to include Muir Beach in their recreational plans. Although this is a fixed route service, it could be considered express service, since it does not stop west of Marin City, it would not trigger the need for matching paratransit service. As Marin Transit and GGNRA consider expansions to the Muir Woods shuttle service, the shuttle could provide an increasing level of service in Muir Beach.

Challenges to establishing a stop include the need for a safe pullout area, the lack of sidewalks on one or both sides of the road, the lack of any traffic controls in the most logical area to place a stop and limited to no capacity on the Muir Woods Shuttle at peak visitation. While the physical and political issues are not insignificant, the benefits to residents and visitors as well as the environment are significant, with potential to off-set vehicle congestion during peak periods by making a viable transit connection to Muir Beach. Marin Transit should continue to collaborate with local residents, the GGNRA, and Caltrans to establish a safe and legal bus stop in Muir Beach. The National Park Service is investing in design and construction of a new, fully accessible pedestrian connection between Highway 1 and the Muir Beach parking area via Pacific Way.

The primary need for transportation in Muir Beach is to get students to school in the morning. Although the Tamalpais Union High School District provides transportation for their students who live in the southern area of West Marin, the school bus does not serve Muir Beach, since it travels on Panoramic Highway to Mill Valley. According to residents of Muir Beach, there will soon be more than 30 children in middle and high school, enough to qualify for their own school bus. Muir Beach should work with the Mill Valley School District (for elementary and middle schools) and the Tam Union High School District to instigate service for Muir Beach. Once school service is established, the school bus could provide minimal service to other residents of this remote community Monday through Friday during the school year. This would require room on the school bus for adults and that all parties agreed to the arrangement. It may make sense to have the school service travel on Shoreline Highway (Route 1) while the Stagecoach picks up passengers on Panoramic Highway.

In California,<sup>14</sup> there are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit using school buses for transporting non-pupils. From the state perspective, the use of school buses and the co-mingling of pupils and non-pupils on school buses appears to be allowed as long as seating is available. Any implementation of these strategies could not and would not proceed without engaging the school district, parents of school children, and the community at large in a discussion of how to best serve the whole community.

The Transportation Authority of Marin sponsors a "School Pool" program which assists parents in forming carpools. The Mill Valley School District participates in this program and could expand it to include Muir Beach households.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on Information provided by John Green, California Department of Education, for TCRP Report on Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services in Nonurban Communities, and confirmed via e-mails and a telephone conversation with NN staff in June 2008.

An additional option for alternative service for Muir Beach residents would be to develop a partnership with a local community-based organization (CBO). Marin Transit could provide a van and seed money for operations, with the CBO providing the majority of operating funds either through a paid or volunteer driver program. Similar partnerships have been established in other places including more remote areas of the Portland, Oregon region, with the result of more personalized service at lower cost than traditional transit can provide.

A final option would be to realign the first eastbound trip of the day from the Panoramic Highway route back to the Shoreline Highway. This change would displace some existing riders in favor of providing a minimal level of service targeted to this specific school need. This option would diminish the ability of the Stage to build ridership (especially among commuters) along Panoramic Highway.

## New Routes and Services

The following options for expanding service area coverage were supported by the public, and might be considered as possibilities for the long term. Cost estimates have not been included because these depend on many external factors, including partnerships with others.

### **Point Reyes to Novato and Terra Linda**

Several different groups requested service to Novato from Point Reyes. With its lower-cost housing, shopping, and businesses, Novato is both a source of and destination for workers in West Marin. In addition, senior advocates in West Marin have requested service from Point Reyes to the major hospitals in east Marin – Sutter Medical Center in Novato and Kaiser Medical Center in Terra Linda. Kaiser in downtown San Rafael is already served by Route 68. At the same time, the town of Nicasio has indicated that it would like to work with Marin Transit to get Stage service. To address the needs of these groups, Marin Transit could consider service from Point Reyes directly through Nicasio, along Nicasio Valley Road to Lucas Valley Road, ending in Novato, with a stop at Sutter Medical Center. Such a route would be operated on a limited basis, such as one to three days a week to gauge demand for such a service.

### **Point Reyes to Petaluma**

Petaluma in Sonoma County is a destination for West Marin residents for shopping, entertainment, and jobs, as well as a source of workers for West Marin. This was a frequent request from outreach participants; employers in West Marin cited difficulty in hiring people for lower-wage jobs who need to drive an hour each way to work a part-time job. Transit service between Petaluma and Point Reyes would serve residents of both areas.

However, Petaluma is in another county, and Marin Transit is supported by Marin County sales tax funds. A service that enables Marin County residents to shop in Sonoma would conflict with the mission of the agency. Such a service might be possible through a partnership with Sonoma County Transit or Petaluma Transit, where costs and revenues of the service would be shared. Researching work start and stop times in both locations could inform an initial schedule should there be agreement, with possible Saturday shopping service.

### **Extend service to northern West Marin and the Point Reyes Peninsula**

Park personnel and representatives of Latino residents living and working in dairies along Bodega Bay requested service between Point Reyes and the towns of Tomales Bay and Marshall.

Tomales Bay State Park is also just north of Point Reyes but is unconnected to transit. The park is comprised of seven separate land parcels located on both the west and east shores of Tomales Bay. On the east side, the Stagecoach service ends at Point Reyes, approximately five miles south of the Millerton area of Tomales State Park. On the west side, Stage service ends in Inverness, about six miles south of Heart's Desire Beach which is also part of the park. Three or four times a year, the 160 spaces in their parking lot fill and park staff have to close the gate. Parking at Shell Beach is also limited. Parking is a challenge when there are events at Vista Point, a facility in the park used for weddings and other gatherings. Extending the Stage to these areas on weekends could help relieve the parking pressures there, and would make this park more accessible to those without cars. In the recommended service changes in this report, an additional mid-day trip is suggested for the Route 68 schedule. If that was added for seven days a week, then it is possible the Coastal Route 62 could be extended to these northern areas in place of its current mid-day trip to San Rafael. Another interim option for connecting to points north of Point Reyes would be to partner with the school bus system in this area. The Shoreline Unified School District runs a bus system for its students that travels about 1000 miles a day.<sup>15</sup> Routes extend from Santa Rosa in Sonoma County and Novato in Marin, to north of Bodega Bay, along the coast through Dillon Beach, Tomales Bay, Marshall, and Point Reyes, and out through the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Point Reyes National Seashore owns all the land within the park and holds ten-year leases with dairy operations throughout the park. Many members of the Latino community who live and work on these dairies do not have cars or licenses and are unable to get to medical services, shopping, or school functions without finding a ride with someone or hitchhiking. However, with the school service running twice a day to pick up and bring home schoolchildren, it may be possible to provide a little transportation for those in this remote area. Any exploration of this strategy should involve the school district, which is ultimately responsible for school bus operations, parents of school children, and the community at large to see if there is support for this approach. The value in connecting these remote communities to employment opportunities, social services, and education opportunities may outweigh concerns regarding comingling students and the public.

## Marketing and Promotional Initiatives

The implementation of the recommended service alternatives provides an opportunity to create user-friendly marketing materials, inform the public about the service, and build alliances with local organizations to support the improved services.

There is strong support from West Marin residents, Stage riders, and local employers to increase Stage ridership for two reasons: to provide stronger financial support for transit, with a possible result of more service; and increased ridership will reduce the number of autos on the road. Marketing was seen by these groups as a way to increase Stage ridership without increasing service costs substantially. This section describes possible marketing and partnership opportunities for the West Marin Stagecoach service.

### Refine Service Marketing Tools

Participants in the outreach process made recommendations for multiple incremental improvements in current service information, including updating the schedule brochure and adding Stage signs to the GGT bus stops. Many of the marketing recommendations below are

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<sup>15</sup> Interview, Steve Rosenthal, Superintendent, Shoreline Unified School District

low- or no-cost, and could be implemented immediately. The measures described in this section could include a free or discounted ride coupon to encourage first-time users.

### **Strengthen Marin Transit's web presence**

Marin Transit's web presence exposes the service to more people who want to take transit to West Marin. Marin Transit is preparing a new website for all of its services that will assist riders with planning their trips. Beyond this, its web presence can be extended through other related web sites. The initial step is establishing working relationships with organizations and agencies that already have web pages and an interest in promoting transit. These include national and state parks, and West Marin organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Innkeepers Association, community groups, and event producers.

### **Advertise locally**

Marin Transit should take advantage of free local advertising in various community-based newsletters. Every small town in West Marin has a newsletter and many have web pages. Marin Transit should make sure that transit information and information on special services as well as transit-related public meetings is distributed to all of these groups. These include Stone Soup (San Geronimo Community Center newsletter), Inverness Association "Bagpiper", and the San Geronimo Planning Group newsletter (120 families).

### **Update and improve the schedule brochure**

The schedule brochure with the route map is the primary marketing piece for Marin Transit. Several suggestions were made to improve the brochure.

- While flag stop service is defined in the schedule, many people are unaware of it. Highlight the flag stop service in all marketing materials so people know they can stop a bus in any safe location. Expand on the information in the current schedule to explain how to flag down a bus, and what constitutes a "safe" location.
- Add to the brochure that the Stage will stop at any GGT bus stop.
- Change the label on the map printed on the schedule from "Pt. Reyes Seashore" to "Point Reyes Seashore/Bear Valley Visitor Center". The current label is confusing to people coming from out of the area, in that they think they will arrive at the beach.
- Add information to the Stagecoach marketing materials (schedule, web sites, etc.) explaining how much luggage can be taken on board the bus.
- Change the requirement to call 24 hours in advance for deviated service to "by 4:00 PM the previous day."

### **Street Presence**

The Stage will stop at any GGT bus stop along its route, but very few of those stops have Stage signs. By adding the Stagecoach or Marin Transit sign to all Golden Gate Transit sign poles, riders will know they can get the Stage there and non-riders will become more aware of the service. As a result of Marin Transit's 2008 Strategic Marketing Plan, Marin Transit is working to implement signage that provides information on the family of Marin Transit services available at each stop.

## **Incorporate the West Marin Stagecoach Schedules into 511 Service Information**

Most travelers get trip information from the Internet, particularly those unfamiliar with the area or who are planning their trip in advance. Travelers from out of the area will not be aware of the Stage or of Marin Transit. Bay Area residents familiar with this service will look there for information on how to take transit to West Marin. Including Stagecoach information on 511 will plug into these markets. Marin Transit is working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to include the Stage.

## **Marketing to Specific Groups**

Given current and projected ridership, several significant market segments are either attracted to the Stagecoach service currently or are underrepresented in the ridership when compared to their numbers in the population of West Marin. These are expected to be important markets in the future. Described in Chapter 3, these market segments include:

- Students (especially high school students)
- Workers
- Seniors
- Recreational users
- The Latino community

While students and workers make up a large percentage of current riders, seniors are underrepresented in the Stage ridership, as is the Latino community. This latter group does use the Stage to commute from eastern Marin to jobs in West Marin, and tends to also work on weekends. Following are recommendations for ways to support and increase Stagecoach use by these groups.

## **Travel Training for Seniors, Youth Riders, and the Latino Community**

Transit education programs in the schools, at senior housing developments, and at senior centers can create new demand for transit services from transit-dependent populations. Many seniors and students may not understand how to use transit. While students, especially middle school age and older, do use the Stage, the number of senior riders is less than might be expected, given the senior population in West Marin. A number of factors surfaced during outreach, including uncomfortable vehicles, bumpy roads, long turnaround times, and a lack of knowledge on how to use the system, leading to fear of getting stranded and not being able to get home. Travel training might increase the number of seniors using the Stage. Interviews with members of the Latino community in West Marin revealed a hesitance to use the bus because of lack of knowledge on how to use the service and how to read the schedule.

Having Marin Transit staff available to speak at school events, senior groups and Latino community events is an excellent, inexpensive way to advertise the service. Public speaking not only allows one to get across a simple message regarding services and availability, but also allows the speaker to educate potential riders how to use public transit, making them better riders. Staff can utilize opportunities to address young, senior, and Spanish-speaking populations where they can answer questions and explain how to use transit and where bus stops are located as well as distribute promotional items and information brochures.

Beyond site visits, a transit ambassador program is another method to provide Marin Transit with an efficient, cost-effective means to interact with the public. Transit ambassador programs use current bus riders who use transit regularly and are enthusiastic supporters of transit to provide outreach and travel training to people who are unaware of transit, do not know how to use transit, or are unsure if transit is “right” for them. Volunteer ambassadors provide hands-on training and information to small groups or individuals who contact the transit agency directly or events sponsored by the agency. Ambassadors need to be matched properly to the group or individual they assist, such as a senior citizen for events at the senior center or at retirement communities, or a wheelchair user if speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair or other mobility aid. Another approach is to recruit bilingual ambassadors to speak at events oriented to Spanish-speakers.

Marin Transit currently has an ambassador program but is seeking volunteers. Ambassadors will be trained by Marin Transit staff to familiarize them with any necessary policies. Ambassadors are typically retired people or others available during the daytime.

### **Marketing to Latino Residents**

In addition to travel training, there are other opportunities to encourage members of the Latino community to use the Stage services. Suggestions from the Latino focus group included having more bilingual drivers, ensuring that Spanish schedules are available on the bus, and having someone go to the Catholic Church in Olema for a Saturday night service to explain the bus service. It was suggested that having the priest bless the bus would be appropriate for this group. With stronger ties to Petaluma than to San Rafael, this group was very interested in a partnership with Petaluma Transit to get service directly from Point Reyes. Marin Transit can provide more information on how to take the Stage to San Rafael and transfer to regional service to Petaluma.

### **Marketing to the Recreational Visitor**

Recreational visitors emerged as an important target market. These potential riders fall into two broad groups – Bay Area residents who visit west Marin for a few hours or a day, on the spur of the moment; and visitors from outside the Bay Area or state, who plan their trips well in advance and get most of their information from the Internet. Point Reyes National Seashore averages 2.5 million visitors per year, while other West Marin parklands combined account for another million visitors. Especially during the summer, many come from outside California and the U.S., where riding transit is more the norm. They are less likely to have a car with them, and are likely to care about the environmental impacts of their choices.

Visitors starting their trip in San Francisco ask at their hotels or seek transportation information in local guides. The National Park Service has marketed the Muir Woods Shuttle through these channels for the four years of its service. Marin Transit could add Stage information to the Shuttle information provided at hotels, on ferries, at the ferry building, and on GGT buses.

Partnering with others who share the goal of having visitors arrive by transit would be low-cost or free. Both the parks and the innkeepers experience parking shortages and the negative effects of traffic. Local innkeepers express enthusiasm for measures that would reduce auto traffic in West Marin, and have both individual and association websites. Hotels in Marin pay taxes to the Marin County Visitors Bureau. This may be a possible source of revenue to support marketing of the Stage.

Specific partner agencies include California State Parks, the National Park Service, the GGNRA, Point Reyes National Seashore, the West Marin Innkeepers Association, the Marin County



Visitor's Bureau and the West Marin Chamber of Commerce. Using their websites in addition to Marin Transit's, visitors planning their trip can find comprehensive information about West Marin and how best to enjoy it without a car. Visitors coming from far away are more likely to trust and follow the advice of local innkeepers. The experience might be marketed as being more European, showing how to get around on local transit and where to rent bicycles and kayaks, as well as providing discounts from local businesses. The Marin Transit day pass will be a popular feature for this group, allowing visitors to get on and off the bus throughout their visit.

## Partnerships and Coordination

### **West Marin National and State Parks**

Millions of visitors come to West Marin every year to visit Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS). With almost all access by private auto, congestion on roadways frequently occurs during the peak periods, and parking lots are often full at the most popular parks. This congestion and the resulting emissions negatively impact parks and park visitors and the quality of life for residents. Congestion also creates pressure to expand roadways and parking lots, which damage the land the park is designed to protect.

Marin Transit serves most of the state parks within the study area (Mount Tamalpais, SP Taylor), as well as Stinson Beach (part of the GGNRA), but brings passengers only as far as the Bear Valley visitors center at PRNS. Neither the east nor west sides of Tomales Bay State Park are accessible by the Stage. Of all the parks, PRNS has by far the highest number of visitors per year. PRNS has attempted to provide transportation from the Bear Valley Visitor's Center to Limantour, but funding for this shuttle is not sustainable.

The GGNRA is updating their General Management Plan and Transportation Plan. Public input to this process emphasizes that the public wants transit options getting to and through parklands. The Muir Woods Shuttle, managed by Marin Transit as of 2009, is an example of how successful park-oriented transportation can be.

Marin Transit should strengthen its partnership with the GGNRA and PRNS in their transportation planning efforts. As seen from the Muir Woods Shuttle experience, the parks can bring grants to support public/park transportation partnerships. Some elements of a partnership would include:

- Seeking joint funding for expanded service areas to include more parklands in a seamless transit system
- Having a representative from Marin Transit participate in the GGNRA and PRNS transportation planning process, and inviting representatives from these parks to participate in Marin Transit's planning processes on a regular basis
- Providing technical assistance to the parks in navigating the regional transportation funding process
- Developing joint marketing efforts to encourage recreational visitors to take the Stage and the Muir Woods Shuttle

During the process of this needs assessment, representatives from all the state and national parks in the study area expressed interest in increasing the number of visitors using transit to access their sites and developing more park-based transportation (such as a hub-and-spoke park shuttle system), and more frequent service in some high-traffic locations (beaches and recreation sites at the southern end of the study area).

## Local Recreational Businesses

The limited bicycle storage on the Stage is a barrier for some people to using the service. An alternative to providing onboard bike storage is to encourage and perhaps partner with bicycle rental operations in West Marin to offer discounts to people arriving by transit. Commuters need to bring their bicycles with them on the bus. Recreational visitors coming to West Marin can rent a bicycle at their destination, relieving the need for onboard bike storage.

Marin Transit could establish a program to encourage local bicycle rental companies to offer a discount on rentals for customers taking transit. This might be extended to local kayak rentals and other local businesses through the local Chamber. Stage service information should include reference to the limited bicycle storage capacity, and information about or links to bicycle rental companies in West Marin.

## The Bicycling Community

Bicycles can provide an important connection between transit and origins and destinations, especially for rural systems. Marin has a very strong bicycling community, organized under the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC).

Marin Transit and MCBC could work together to:

- Promote bike sharing or rental operations at main connection points, especially in West Marin, so that riders who don't need to use their bikes on both ends of a trip feel comfortable leaving their bike behind
- Offer a bike station, providing storage, rental, and repair services, at the Marin City and San Rafael Transit Center
- Provide secure bike parking at more heavily used Stage stops

## Local Event Coordinators

West Marin, particularly Point Reyes, is host to events at community centers, farm, and ranch tours organized by the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, as well as special events a few times a year such as Western Weekend, Fourth of July activities, and the annual Earth Day Coastal Cleanup Day in September. Marin Transit could partner with these organizations to encourage attendees to take transit and to encourage them to adjust the scheduled time of events to allow people to get to them using the Stagecoach. Marin Transit vehicles could participate in Fourth of July parades and other high-visibility events.

## The Latino Business Community

Outreach to the Latino community in West Marin elicited numerous suggestions on possible partnership opportunities. The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Camera Comercio Latino are organizations of businesses catering to the Spanish-speaking community. A partnership between the bus and the businesses could include mutual promotion through coupons and bus tickets, and coordinating bus service with special events such as Cinco de Mayo, or events at the Wellness Center in the Canal district of San Rafael.

## Auxiliary Transportation

Even with extraordinary measures, the Stage will not serve all transportation needs in West Marin. Residents have shown a willingness to organize informal transportation systems such as

MARIN TRANSIT

carpools and ridesharing through Internet sites to connect with east Marin. Marin Transit might play a role in filling these gaps by assisting community groups, social service agencies, and senior centers in acquiring vans or supporting carpooling so they can provide their own transportation. Arrangements will need to be in place to maintain, insure, and fuel any vehicles obtained. Marin Transit is working with West Marin Senior Services on developing the resources to maintain and operate a vehicle to serve its clients.

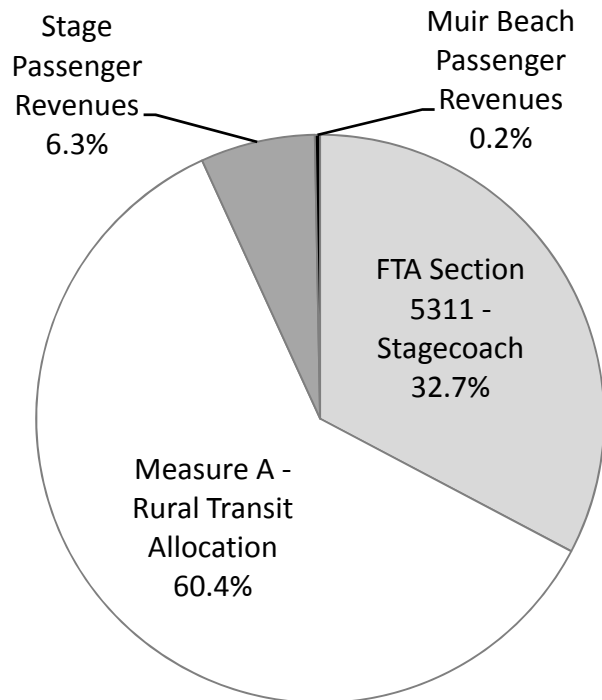


## Chapter 6. Funding Picture, Cost of Service Recommendations, and Capital Requirements

The financial goals of this needs assessment are to develop a plan based on realistic revenue projections and to recommend services that can be sustained over time. This chapter presents the funding context for rural transit services in West Marin. It reviews the federal and local funds that support West Marin transit services and provides cost estimates for recommended service improvements and identifies anticipated vehicle needs. The objective is to ensure that when a recommended service plan is developed and the required capital needs are identified, they are affordable and can be financially sustained.

The two primary funding sources are Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 funds and the Measure A local transportation sales tax. The percentage share of each operating fund source for fiscal year 2008-09 is graphically displayed in Figure 6-2. It shows that Measure A accounted for 60% of operating revenues and about 33% of the costs are covered by FTA Section 5311 funds. Passenger fare revenues account for 6% of operating revenues. Administrative Revenues of approximately \$40,000 were allocated to rural transit from Marin County property tax receipts in FY 08-09.

**Figure 6-1 Percentage Share of Operating Revenues**



### Measure A Funds

Beginning in 1970, the state legislature passed several bills that authorize county governments to levy sales taxes for transportation purposes within their jurisdiction. Counties with a half-cent

sales tax dedicated to transportation purposes are known as self-help counties. On November 2, 2004, Marin County residents overwhelmingly approved Measure A, a half-cent transportation sales tax that is expected to raise approximately \$331 million over the next 20 years for local transportation projects. Of this amount, 55%, or \$182 million, is dedicated to transportation, including local bus services, rural service, specialized services, and capital needs.

One objective of Measure A is to provide a dedicated source of local funds for public bus transit, enabling Marin Transit to plan and implement services tailored to the needs of local residents. The Measure A allocation for Marin Transit's rural services in FY 2008-09 is approximately \$602,626 including carryover funds from the prior year. The recent downward trend in the economy has negatively impacted sales tax receipts. The most recent projections anticipate a decline in Measure A revenues for next fiscal year, for an allocation of \$558,118 in FY 2009-10, continuing to decrease in FY 2010-11 to \$519,140. Starting in FY 2011-12, the Transportation Authority of Marin projects that Measure A Funds will grow at a rate of 3.4% per year from this reduced base.

## FTA Section 5311

This is a federal formula grant program to support lifeline transit services in rural areas and small urban areas (less than 50,000 in population). This program nearly doubled in funding with the passage of the last federal transportation law, SAFETEA-LU. These funds can be used for transit capital and operating purposes in non urbanized areas. Under SAFETEA-LU, Section 5311 funds can provide up to 50% of operating costs to support transit operations. Out of the pot of 5311 funds available to the region, there has not been enough funding available to allow for this level of financial support. Marin Transit received \$336,080 in FTA 5311 funds to support operations in FY 2008-09. The federal government is in the preparing a new 6 year transportation law for approval in 2010.

## Passenger Fares

Passenger fares account for just over 6% of rural transit revenue in West Marin, including fare collected on the Stagecoach and Muir Beach Dial-a-Ride service. With the Dial-a-Ride discontinued, the projected farebox recovery rate for FY 2009-10 is 6.6%. The farebox recovery ratio on the Stagecoach was 10.6% for FY 2007-08 with less than 1% for Muir Beach DAR. A 5% farebox recovery ratio is typical within the transit industry for a rural system of this size operating within a low-density environment.

The Stagecoach installed new registering fare boxes in March 2009, and has introduced new period pass and stored value fare cards. These consist of a daily, weekly, and monthly pass. Passengers purchase a daily pass on board the vehicle. Marin Transit will propose fare increases on all its services over the next two to three years.

## Capital Needs

The major capital need in the next several years is fleet replacement as vehicles reach the end of their useful life cycle. Marin Transit will receive Rural 5311 federal stimulus money (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds) to replace three contractor-owned vehicles with three Marin Transit-owned vehicles. Assuming a useful life for these vehicles of seven years or 100,000 miles, Marin Transit has programmed replacement of three Stagecoach vehicles in FY 2014-15

and a second set of three vehicles in FY 2016-17, using 5311 or 5311f funds and matching them with local Measure A funds.

Other capital needs include passenger amenities, such as bus stops, signage, and shelters. Funds to pay for vehicles and other capital equipment in future years could be provided through competitive FTA Section 5311(f) grants, with matching funds from dedicated Measure A funds. This is money separate from the day-to-day funds that support operations.

## Financial Projections and Service Recommendations

Figure 6-2 provides operating cost projections based on service recommendations along with the any additional vehicles required.

Marin Transit faces a difficult immediate future, with declining sales tax revenues due to the general economic slump. Service additions on the Stagecoach will not be possible until revenues increase and outpace increasing costs.

Recommendations for service changes presented in this report vary in terms of the amount of additional funding required for implementation. Some service adjustments can be made at the current funding levels, while others require additional funding. The table below summarizes the recommendations that require new funds.

**Figure 6-2 Estimated Cost of Service Recommendations**

Recommendation	Additional Vehicles Required	Service Hours	Estimated Annual Operating Cost
Route 61 Summer Short-Turn Service	1	193.5	\$12,144
Route 62 Additional Service Day	0	364	\$22,845
Route 68 Added Service	1	1440	\$90,374





# APPENDIX A

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## STEERING COMMITTEE



## Appendix A. Steering Committee

Following is a roster of the Steering Committee for the West Marin Needs Assessment Study.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/ Representative</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Jerry Abbott	Former driver, West Marin Stagecoach	Driver and Rider Interests
Todd Barto	Samuel P. Taylor Park	Recreational interests
Joan Corbett	West Marin Senior Services	Senior Services
Amanda Eichstaedt	West Marin Chamber of Commerce	Business and Recreational Interests
Anny Parducci Owen	Go Geronimo	Bike / Pedestrians, Schools, Bolinas
John Severson	Coastal Health Alliance	Medical, PWD, Seniors
William Shook	Point Reyes National Seashore	Recreational interests
Alexa Viets	GGNRA	Recreational interests
Curt Willig	West Marin Senior Services	Senior Services



# APPENDIX B

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## STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED



## Appendix B. Stakeholders Interviewed

Type	Group Name	Contact	Title
Agriculture	Grown in Marin / Cooperative Extension Marin County	Ellie Rilla	
Agriculture	Marin County Agriculture Commissioner's Office	Anita Sauber	Dairy Certification
Agriculture	McEvoy Ranch (olives)	Dana	Manager
Agriculture	Star Route Farms	Annabelle Lenderink	Manager
Agriculture	Strauss Family Creamery	Patty Hayness	Human Resources
Agriculture	University of California Cooperative Extension	Ellie Rilla	Researcher
Cmty Center	The San Geronimo Valley Community Center	Suzanne Sadowski	
Community Org	Greater Muir Beach Neighbors	Erin Pinto	Member
County Planning	Marin County Planning Commission	Steve Thompson	Commissioner
Environment	Environmental Action Committee of West Marin	Frederick Smith	Executive Director
Housing - Coast Guard	US Coast Guard Training Center (Two Rocks)	Jared Esselman	Chief Master at Arms
Housing/HOA	Inverness Association	Jerry Abbott	President
Housing/HOA	Inverness Ridge Association	David Wilson	President
Housing/HOA	Nicasio Landowners Association	Stan Loar	President
Housing/SocSvc	Bolinas County Land Trust	Natalie Pepper	Property Manager
Housing/SocSvc	San Geronimo Valley Affordable Housing Assn	Cathy Bleeker	House Manager
Recreation	Hosteling International – Marin Headlands	Hannah Morris	General Manager
Recreation	Hosteling International – Point Reyes	Mary Gabriel-MacGabhann	General Manager
Recreation	Pt Reyes Lodging & Marin Co Visitors Bureau	Mila Caceres	Committee Member
Resident	Point Reyes Village Association	Weibke Buxbaum	Past President
Resident	Point Reyes Village Association	George Stamoulis	Member
Resident	Point Reyes Village Association	Laura Leek	Member
Resident	West Marin Plumbing	Dennis Luftig	Owner
School	Bolinas-Stinson School District	Kara Blake	Secretary
School	Nicasio School	Christy Stocker	Principal
School	Shoreline Unified School District	Steve Rosenthal	Superintendent
School	Tamalpais High	Corbett Elsen	Vice Principal
School	Tomales Village CSD	Margaret Graham	
School	West Marin Elementary	Laura Richardson	Secretary

