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January 7, 2019

Honorable Board of Directors  
Marin County Transit District  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SUBJECT: Marin Transit Connect On-Demand Transit Pilot Program Update**

**board of directors**

Dear Board Members:

stephanie moulton-peters  
president  
city of mill valley

**RECOMMENDATION:** Accept report.

damon connolly  
vice president  
supervisor district 1

**SUMMARY:** Marin Transit Connect is an on-demand, public transit service offered in Northern San Rafael that has been in operation for just over six months. Staff have prepared an update for your Board based on initial observations, data collection, and a survey administered in November 2018. At the January 7, 2019 meeting, staff will discuss these results in detail. The following is a quick summary of the project.

dennis rodoni  
2nd vice president  
supervisor district 4

**BACKGROUND:** Emerging mobility services are offering new opportunities to provide more efficient and attractive transportation services to a variety of transit markets. These opportunities include advances in scheduling and dispatch technology and vehicle design. Marin Transit has worked proactively to understand the changing transportation landscape and determine how the District can best adapt to and leverage these changes to improve service for our riders. Several planning efforts have referenced the need for this type of technology. These include:

judy arnold  
director  
supervisor district 5

- 2010 Senior Mobility Action & Implementation Plan;
- 2013 Job Access Mobility Institute (JAMI) Summary Report;
- Marin Access 2016 Strategic Analysis and Recommendations; and
- Marin Transit 2016 and 2018 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP).

kate colin  
director  
city of san rafael

kathrin sears  
director  
supervisor district 3

katie rice  
director  
supervisor district 2

In addition, the District's partnership with Via in developing the pilot has benefited from discussions with private businesses, non-profit organizations, and peer agencies. Beginning in 2014, ongoing stakeholder engagement has helped staff to identify partnership

opportunities that can leverage technology and policy changes. The District has continuously sought out funding to support innovative mobility initiatives that will improve local transit offerings and serve the mobility needs of all Marin residents.

**STATUS:** The pilot project is the first on-demand service of its kind for Marin Transit. Developing the project required significant collaboration with Via, Whistlestop, the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), and stakeholder groups in the designated service area (senior facilities, employers, retail centers, etc.). The service attributes consist of:

- **Service Hours:** weekday, 6:20am-7:00pm
- **Ride Requests:** made using smartphone app or calling scheduling line
- **Fare:** \$4.00/seat or discounted \$2.00/seat for senior/ADA/transit stop. \$40.00 monthly pass option also available
- **Service Area:** Northern San Rafael
- **Vehicles:** Accessible vans (Nine passengers or five plus wheelchairs)

The Marin Transit Connect pilot is an opportunity for the District to test a new model of transit service to determine whether it can efficiently serve the unmet needs of multiple rider markets and that is attractive. The goals are to gain experience with the dynamic, on-demand scheduling software and understand whether and how the Connect serves the markets identified below.

Market	Objectives
Paratransit Riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better understand same day paratransit opportunities and service delivery model</li> <li>▪ Improve transit options for conditionally eligible paratransit riders</li> </ul>
Commuters traveling from outside of Marin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce number of drive-alone commuters</li> </ul>
Northern San Rafael residents and commuters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve first and last mile connectivity between Northern San Rafael residential neighborhoods and transit corridors</li> <li>▪ Test delivery method for more effective/productive neighborhood shuttle</li> </ul>

Since the launch of service on May 22, 2018, staff have closely collaborated with Via and Whistlestop to monitor and adjust service parameters. These include hours of operation, number of vehicles in service, and various operating procedures for drivers and riders. In late August, Marin Transit signed agreements with the two largest employers in Marin, the County of Marin and Kaiser, committing them to pay the fare for their employees who use the service. These partnerships significantly increased usage of the system and allowed the District to better understand the limits of the technology and work with Via to update and adjust operating parameters to meet program objectives.

Up until December 16, 2018, staff from Marin Transit and Via were in ongoing discussions to identify and update the software to address ongoing performance issues. A software update pushed on Sunday, December 16, 2018 corrected the most significant algorithm issues that hindered batching of rides and the user experience for riders. Staff feel that achieving stability within the software will now provide a sufficient baseline to fully assess the performance of the pilot service. Thus, staff is starting the calendar on an update pilot for January 1, 2019. This new

date is for internal monitoring only and will not make a noticeable impact on the service to the riding public.

Staff plan to present a formal evaluation of the service in Summer 2019. Based on that evaluation, staff will provide a recommendation to your Board on whether to continue the service, modify or change the service, or cancel it. Should Marin Transit decide to continue to offer the Connect, staff will perform the required steps to formalize the service.

**FISCAL/STAFFING IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Betts". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Robert Betts  
Director of Operations and Planning

Attachment: Marin Transit Connect Presentation



# Connect Service Update

Marin Transit Board of Directors

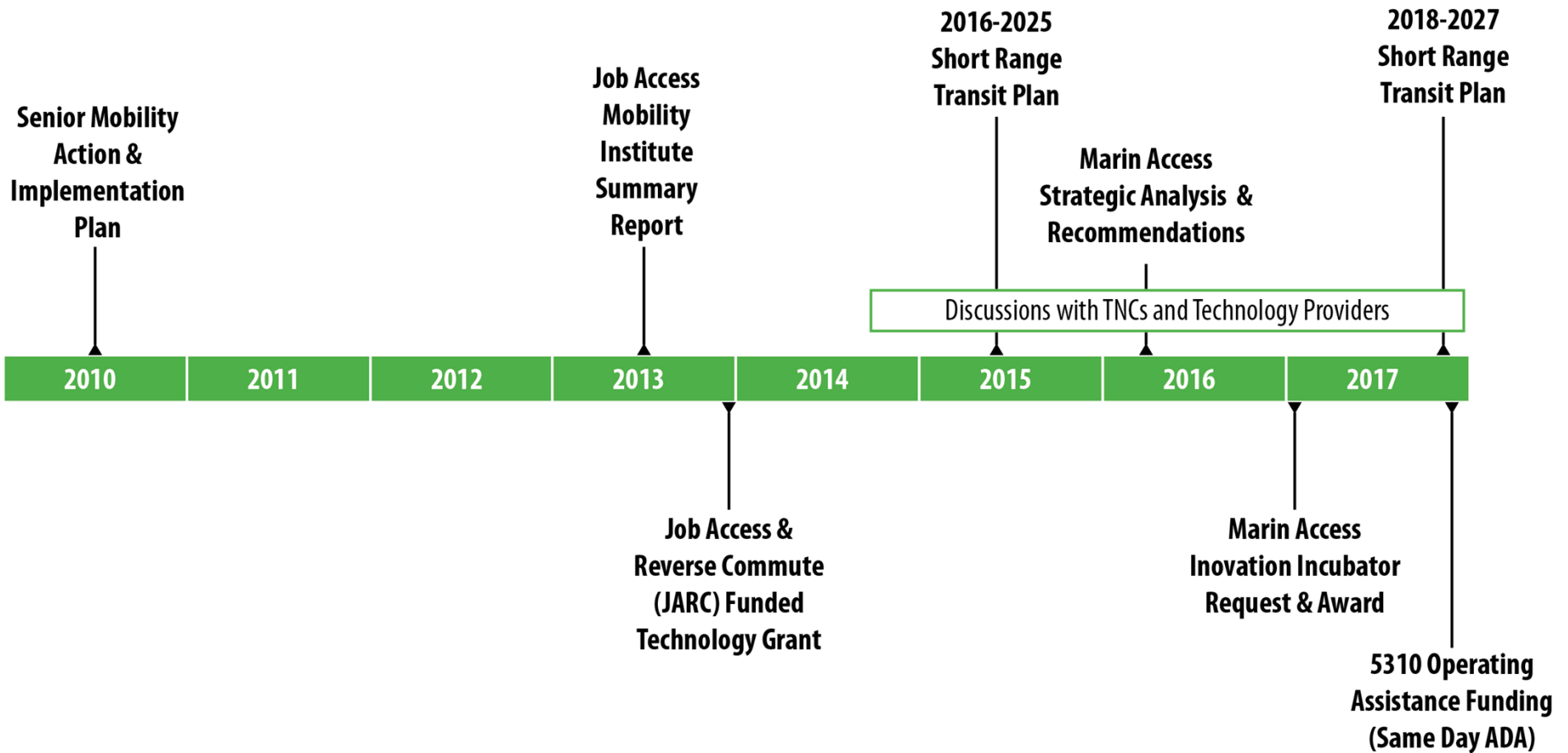
January 7, 2018

# Overview of Presentation

- Development History
- What is Connect?
- Why Connect?
- Who's Using Connect?
- Rider & Non-Rider Preferences
- Performance Trends
- Lessons Learned Thus Far
- Next Steps



# Planning/Funding Timeline



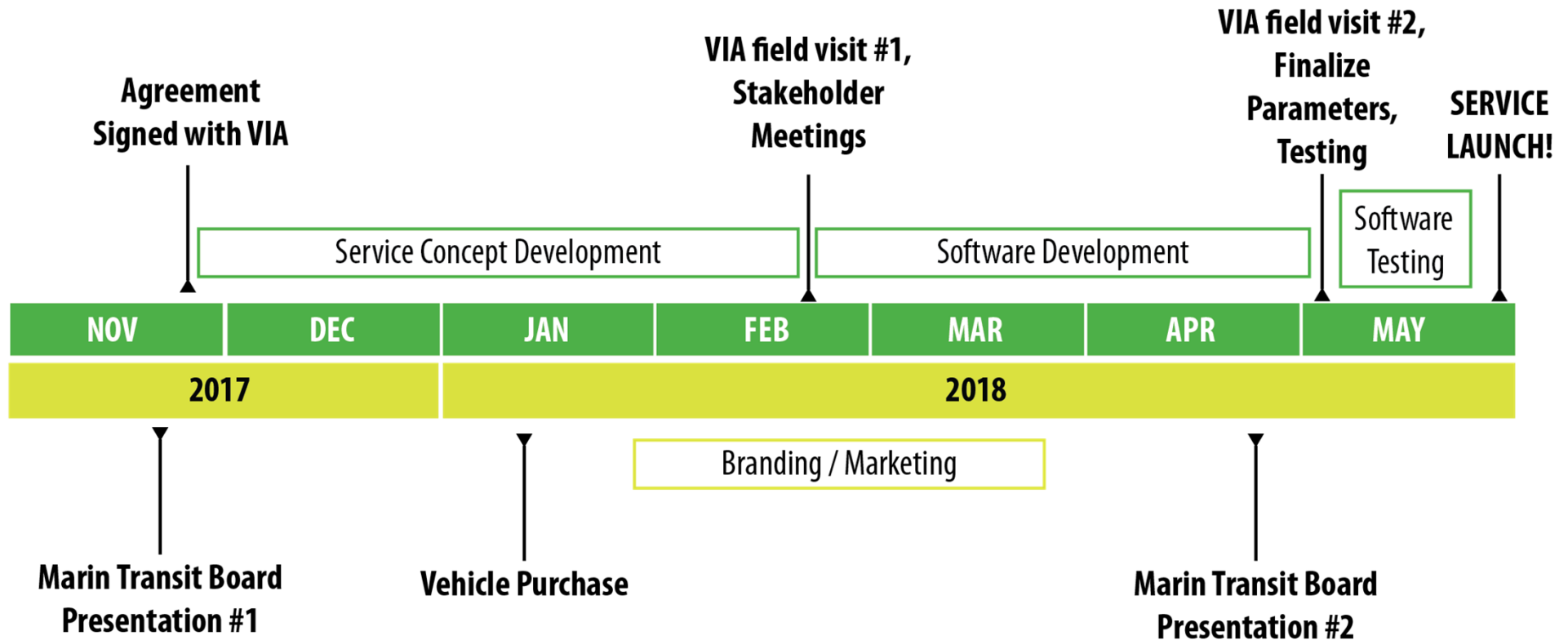
# Why Connect?



- **Goals:**
  - Provide increased/new same-day option for riders with disabilities
  - Increase first and last mile connectivity to existing fixed route transit
  - Help commuter traveling to jobs in Marin County reach their final destinations
- **Pilot Program Questions:**
  - Can a new program effectively serve multiple markets?
  - How will riders respond to new technologies (app-based reservation service)?

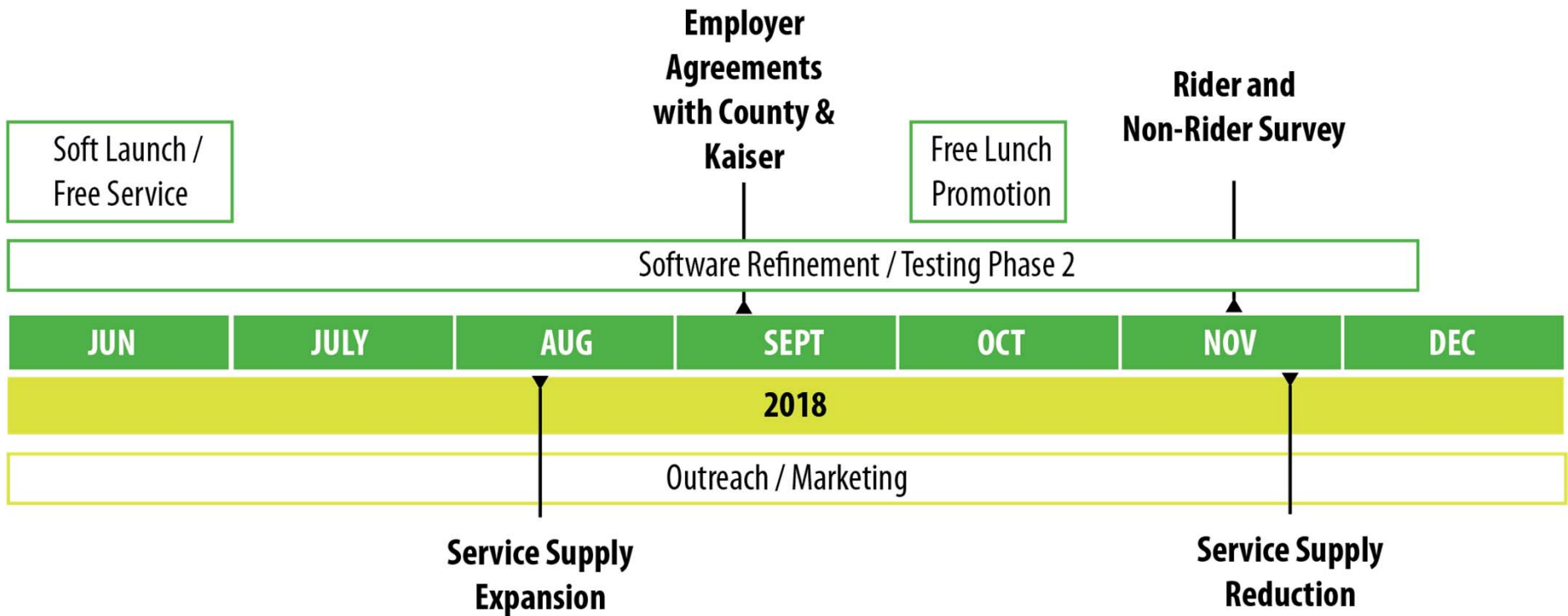


# Connect Service Development Timeline





# 2018 Timeline



# What is Connect?

- On demand, shared-ride, accessible general public transit service
- Trips requested through an App or by calling Scheduling Line
- Curb-to-curb service within the Service Area (Northern San Rafael)
- Agency-owned vehicles operated under contract with paratransit service provider (Whistlestop)



# Service Overview



**Service Hours:** weekdays (6:20 am – 7:00 pm)



**Ride Request:** made using app or calling scheduling line



**Fares:** \$4.00 seat/\$2.00 seat (transit stop/senior/ADA) / \$40 month pass



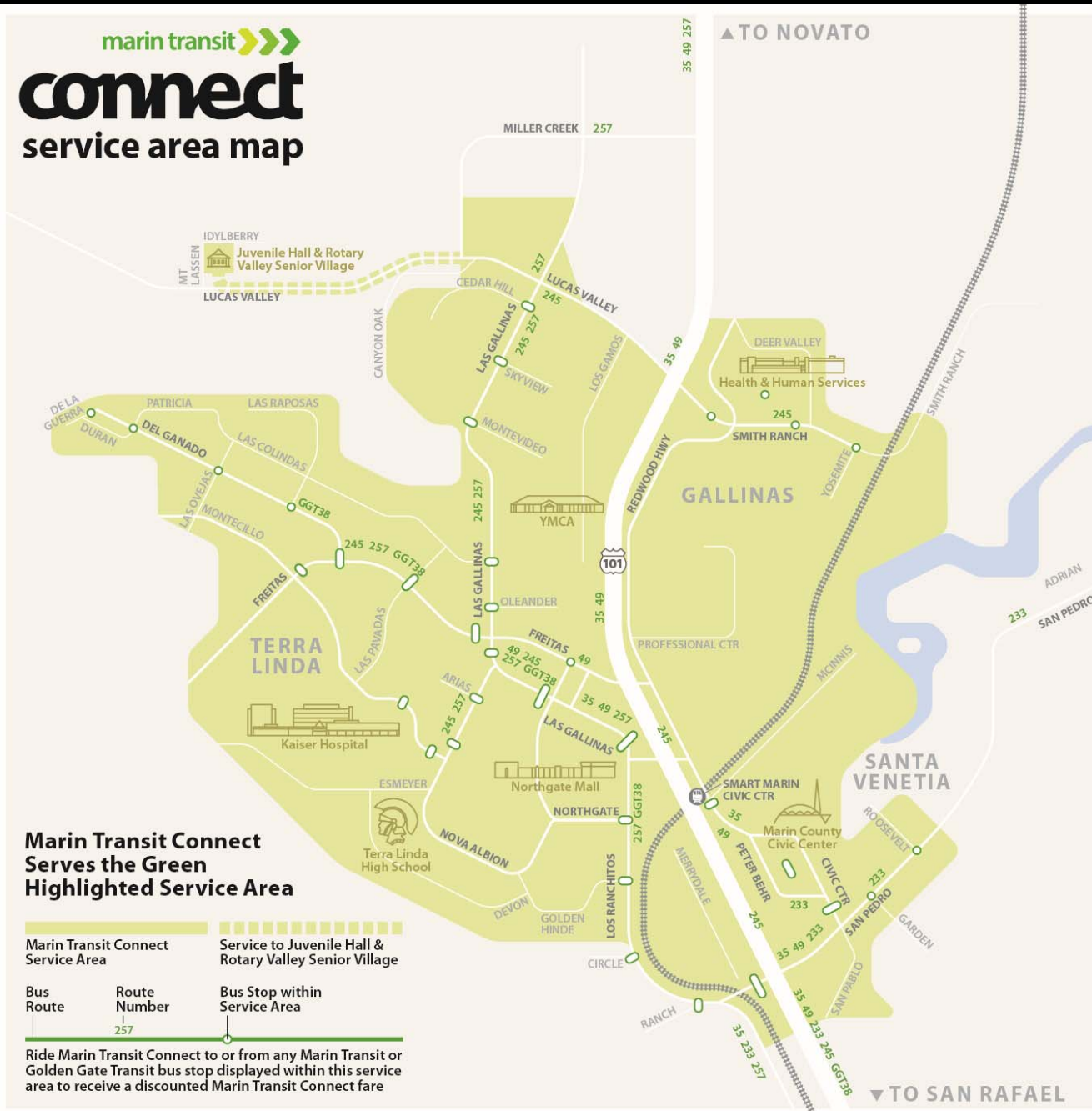
**Service Area:** Northern San Rafael



**Vehicles:** 9 passenger accessible vans

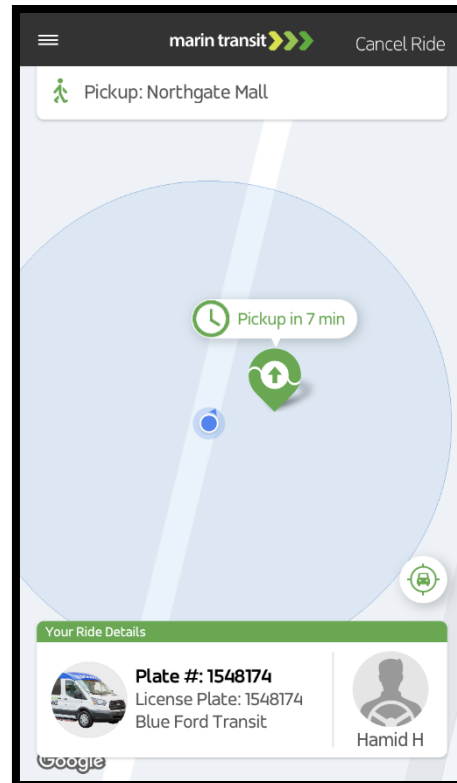
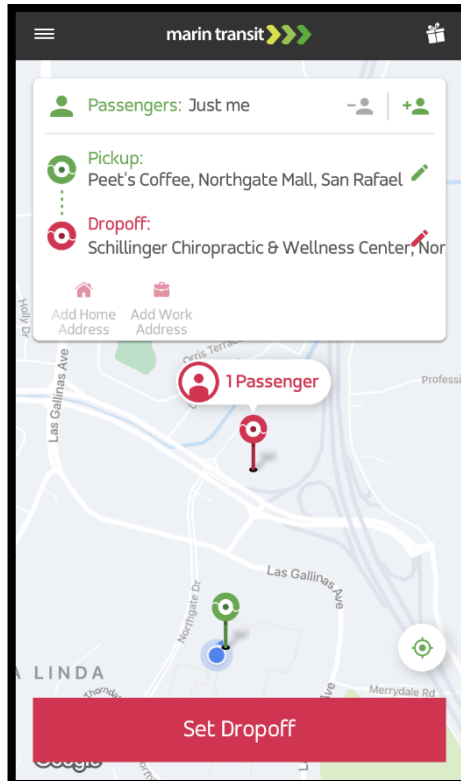
# Service Area

## service area map



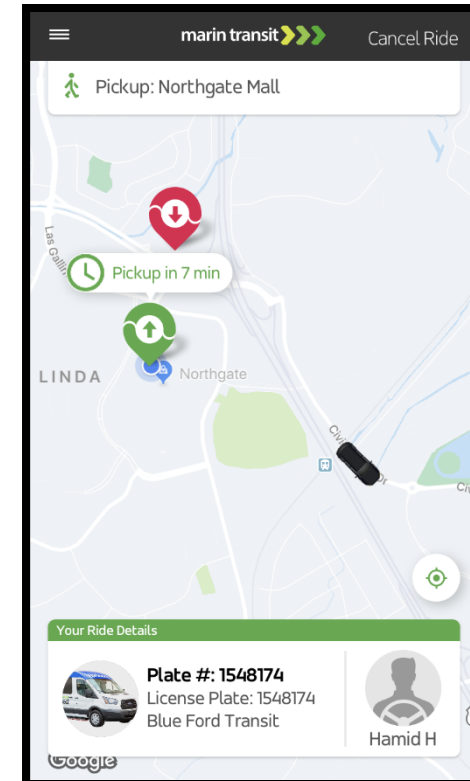
# Trip Booking Flow

## Trip booking



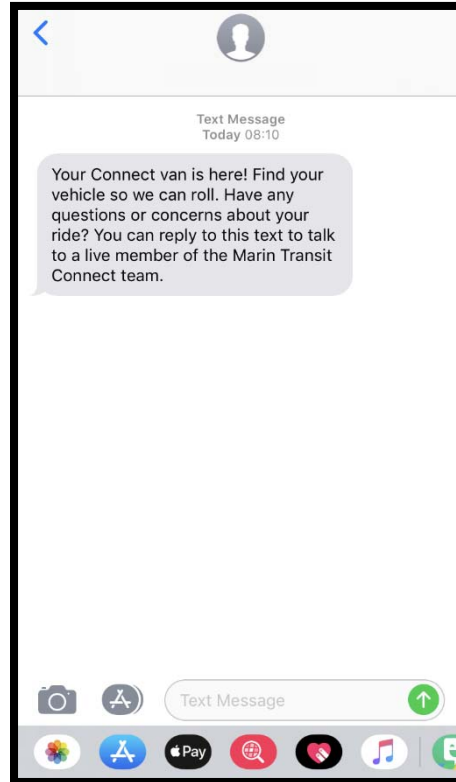
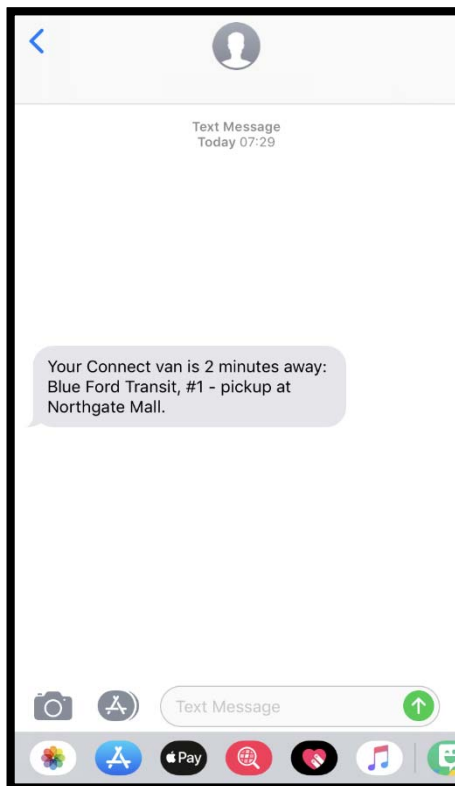
## Vehicle assigned

## Vehicle location



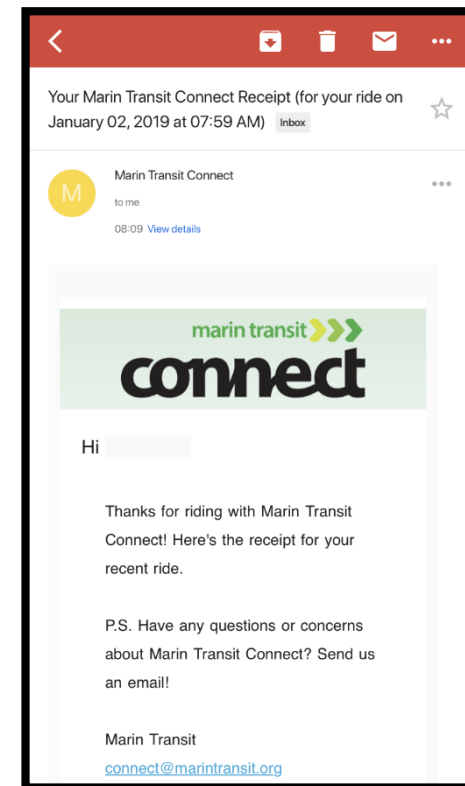
# Trip Booking Flow

## 2 minute notification



## Vehicle arrival notification

## Post ride email



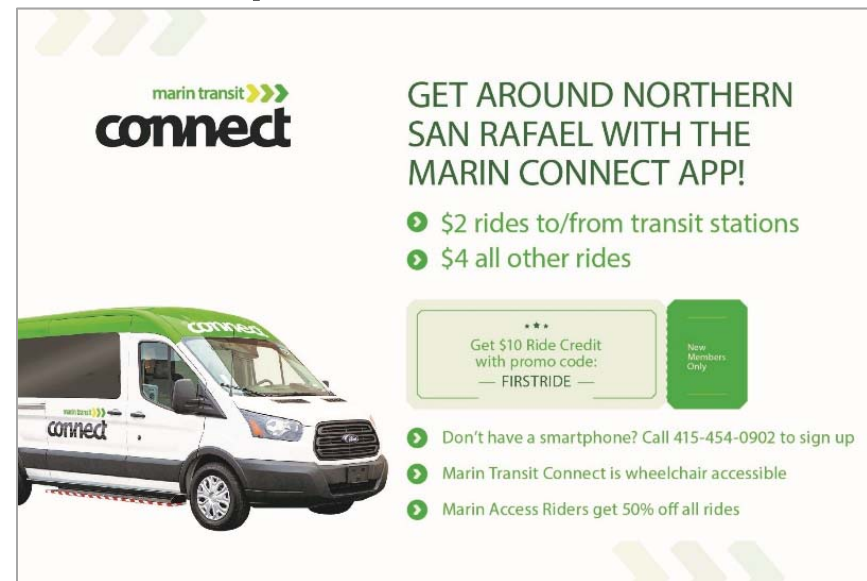
# Why Partnership with VIA?

- Access to **data**
  - Fully understand who use the service and how they use it
  - Meet reporting requirements
- Direct **communication with users**
  - App and email communication
- Control over **service design**
  - Service Area
  - Hours of Operation
  - Pricing
- Control over **operations**
  - Vehicles
  - Driver training and testing
  - Accommodate seniors and those with disabilities



# Outreach and Marketing Efforts

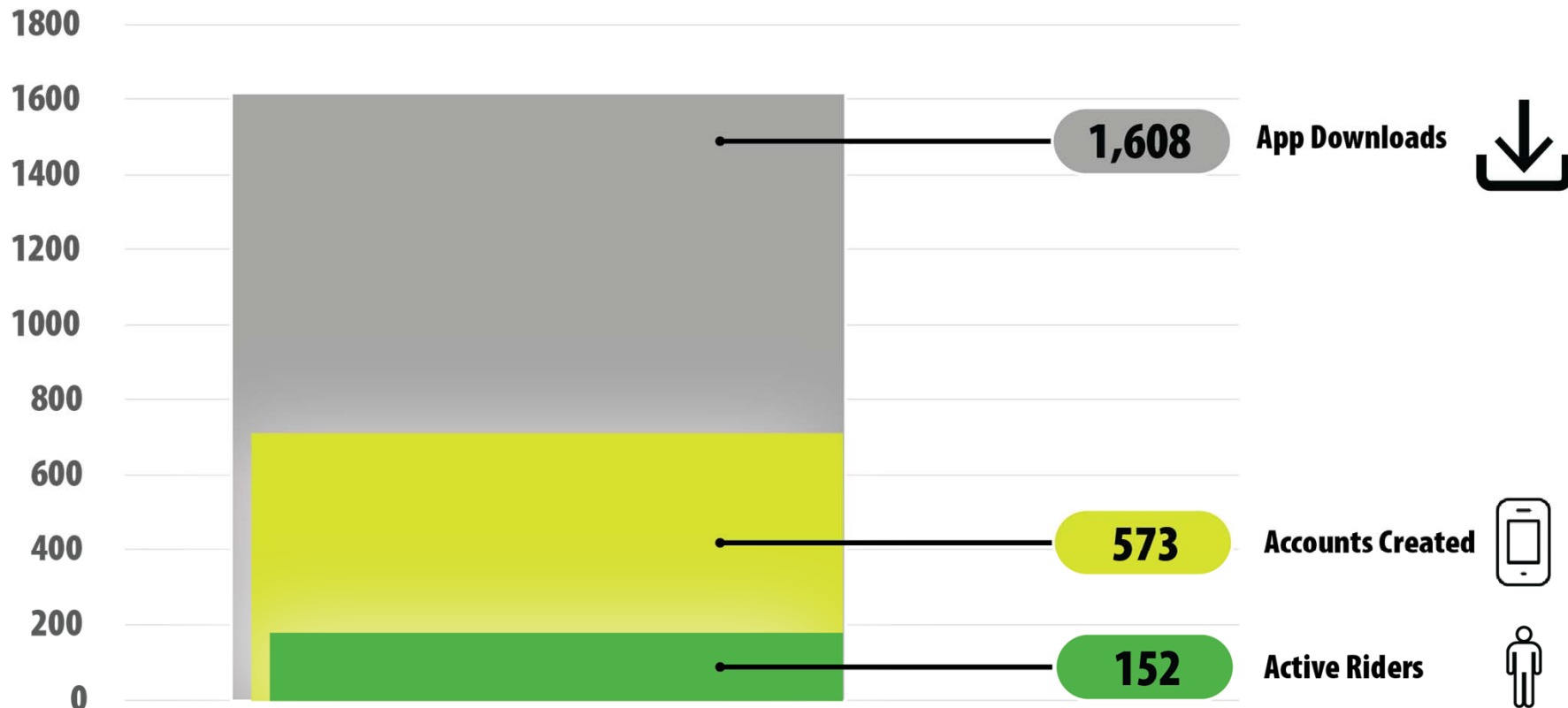
- Community presentations / events
- Business outreach
- Print materials (banner, flyer, bus stop notices, poster)
- Connect Street Ambassadors
- E-blasts, social media, and other web campaigns
- Promotional campaigns
- Rider and non-rider surveys



The flyer features the Marin Transit Connect logo at the top left. Below the logo is a photograph of a white van with a green roof and 'connect' branding. To the right of the van, the text reads: 'GET AROUND NORTHERN SAN RAFAEL WITH THE MARIN CONNECT APP!'. Below this, two green circular icons with white text indicate '\$2 rides to/from transit stations' and '\$4 all other rides'. A green box contains the text 'Get \$10 Ride Credit with promo code: FIRSTRIDE' and 'New Members Only'. At the bottom, three green circular icons with white text provide additional information: 'Don't have a smartphone? Call 415-454-0902 to sign up', 'Marin Transit Connect is wheelchair accessible', and 'Marin Access Riders get 50% off all rides'.



# Program Usage



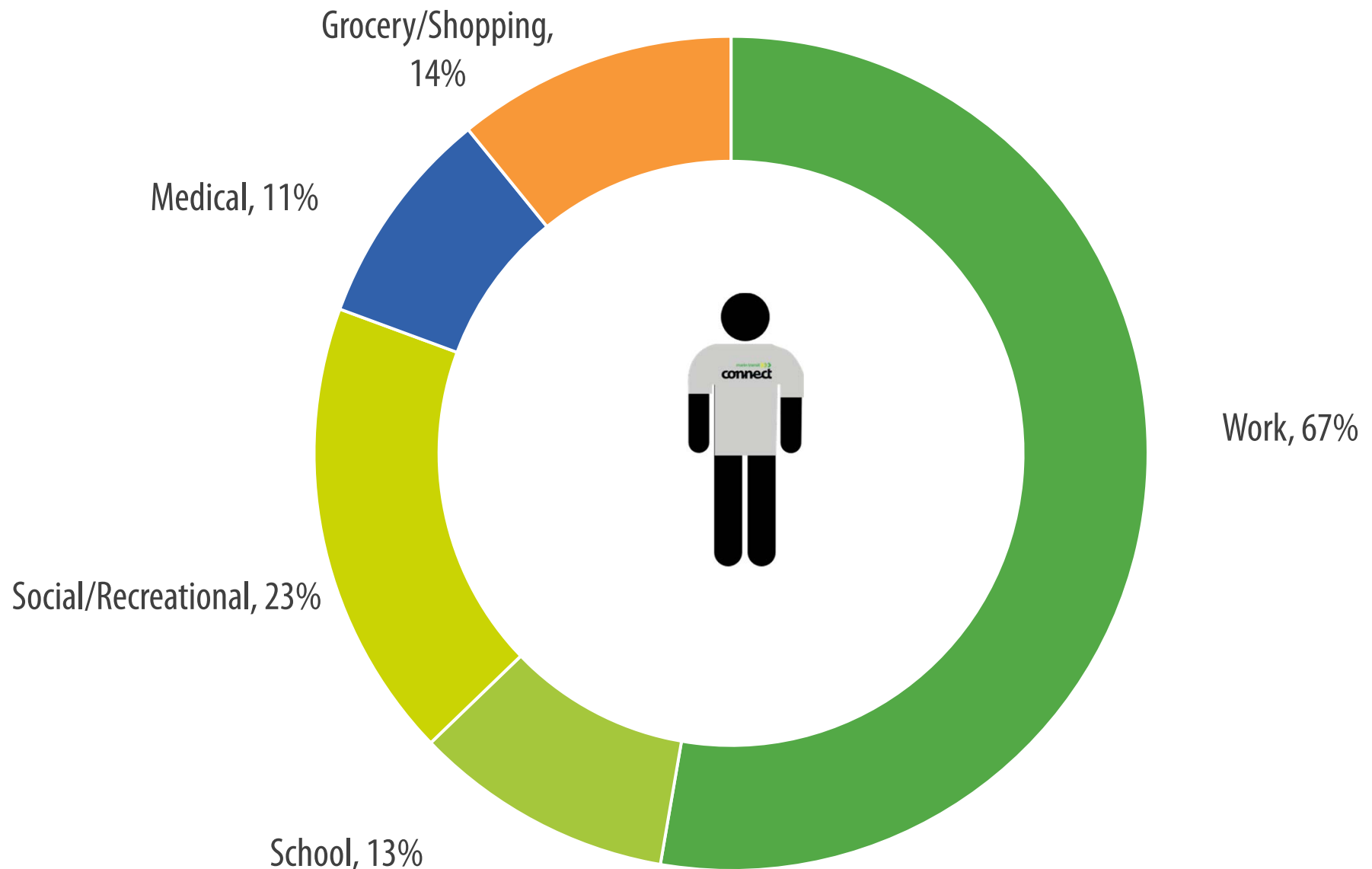
- Over 6,200 unique views on the [www.marintransit/connect](http://www.marintransit/connect) website

# Rider Profile – Who Is Using the Service?

## Of the 152 active riders...

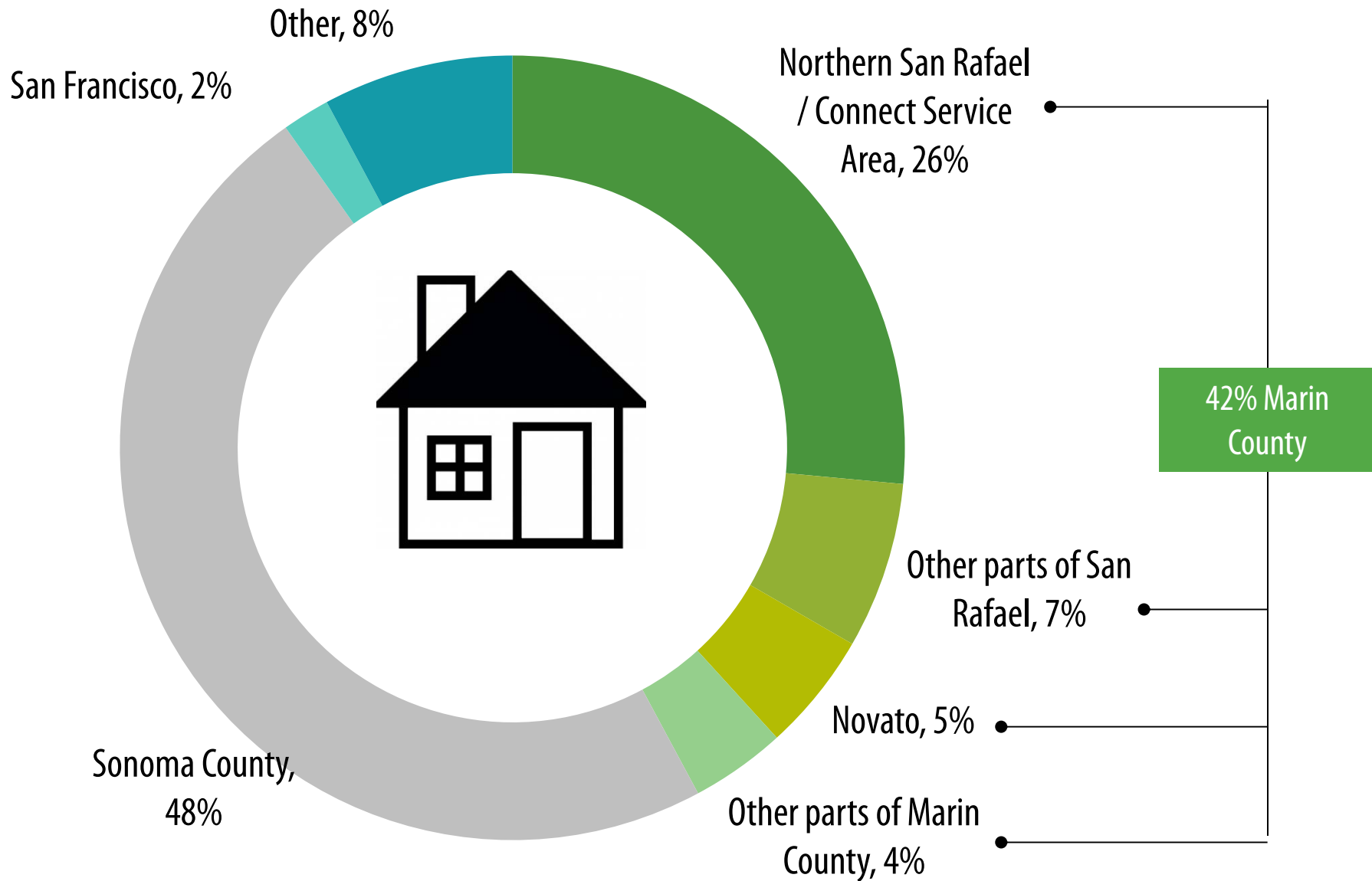
- 65% have taken more than 2 rides. 15% have taken more than 50 rides
- 11% are registered for Marin Access programs (senior+ADA services)
- 7% use a wheelchair or other mobility device that requires an accessible vehicle
- 49% of rides since September are associated with an employer-sponsored program (either Marin County or Kaiser). 38% of all accounts are related to employer programs.

# Rider Profile – Trip Purpose



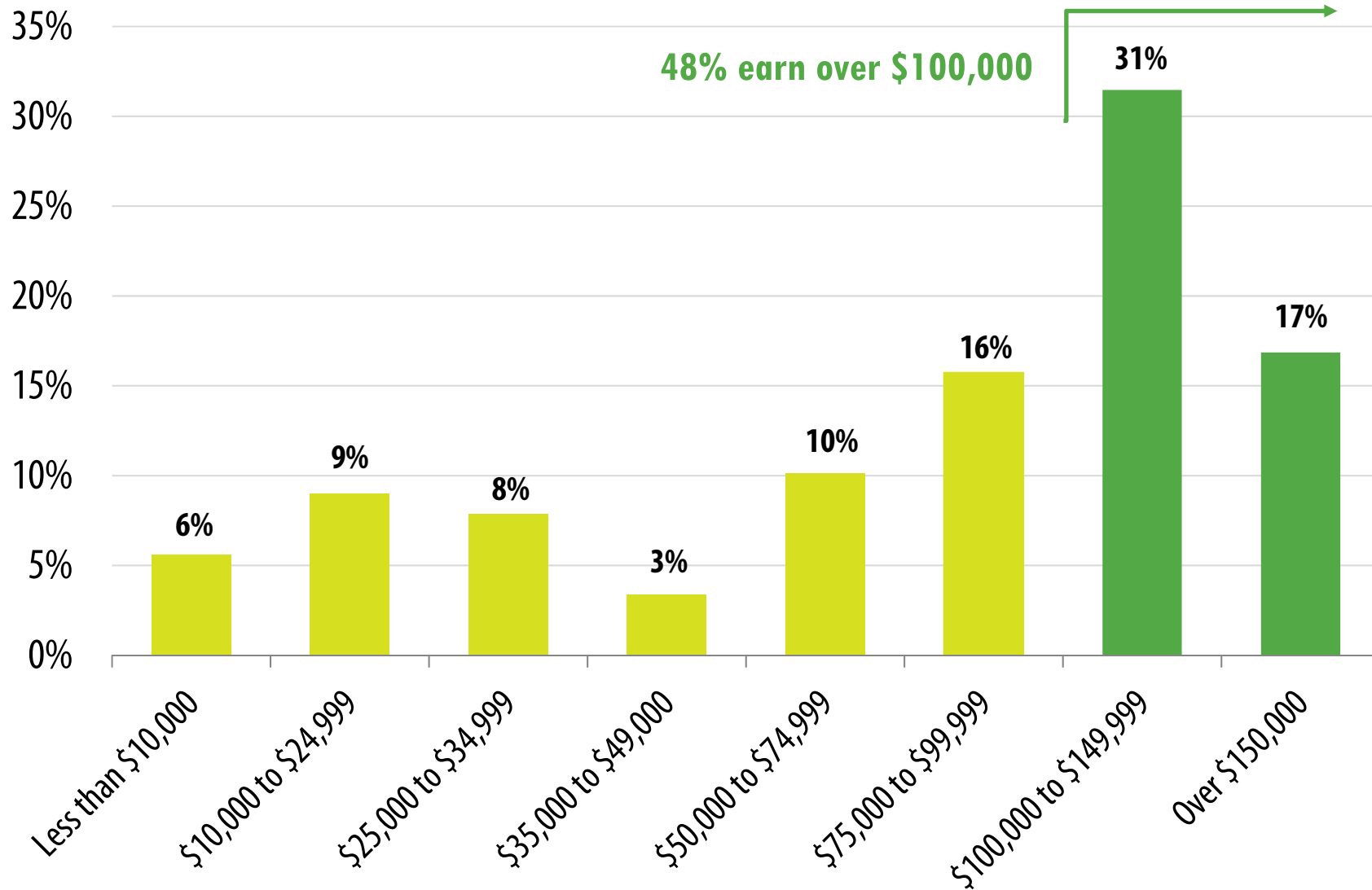
Source: 2018 Connect onboard rider survey

# Rider Profile – Place of Residence



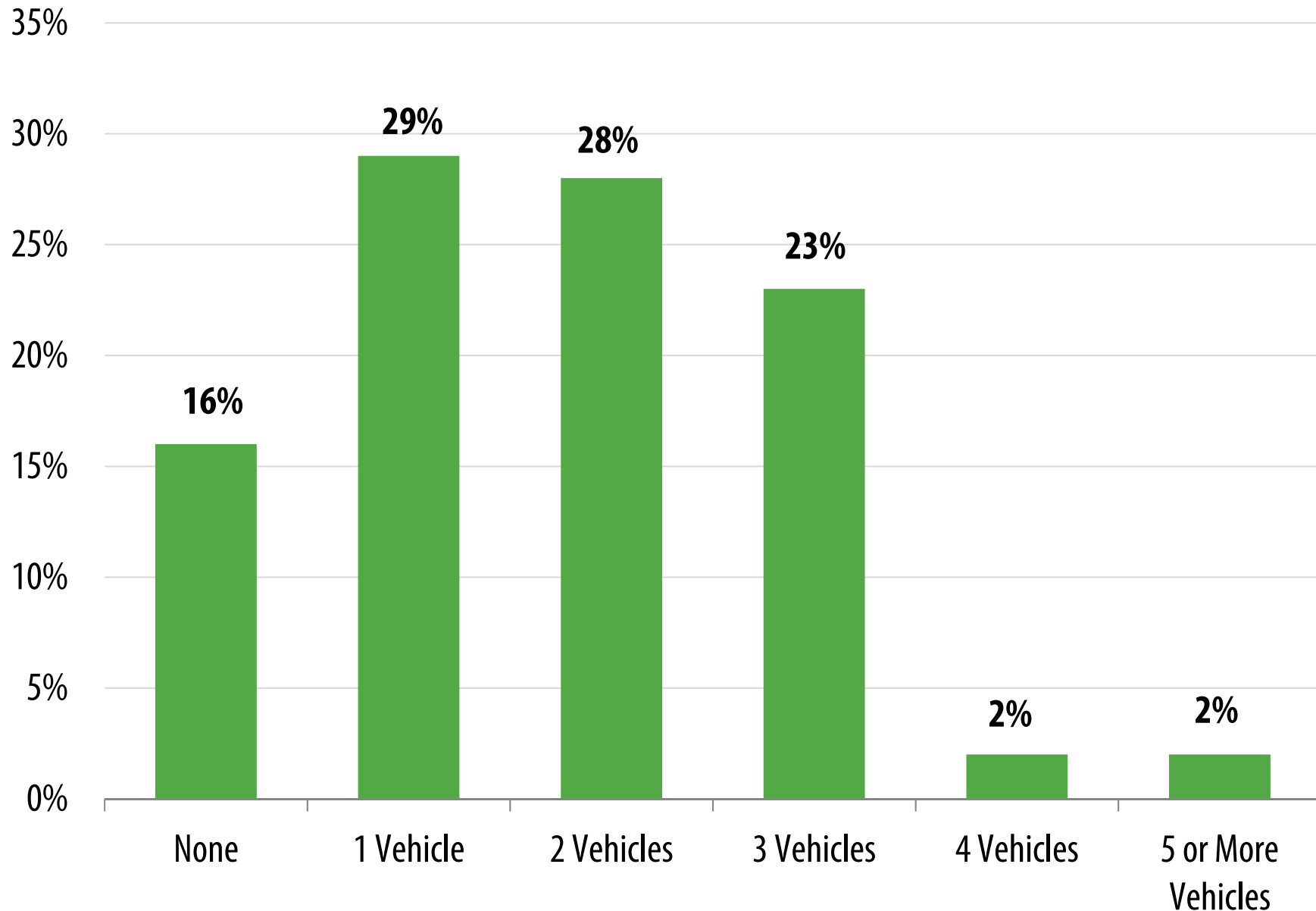
Source: 2018 Connect onboard rider survey

# Rider Profile – Income



Source: 2018 Connect onboard rider survey

# Rider Profile – Auto Ownership



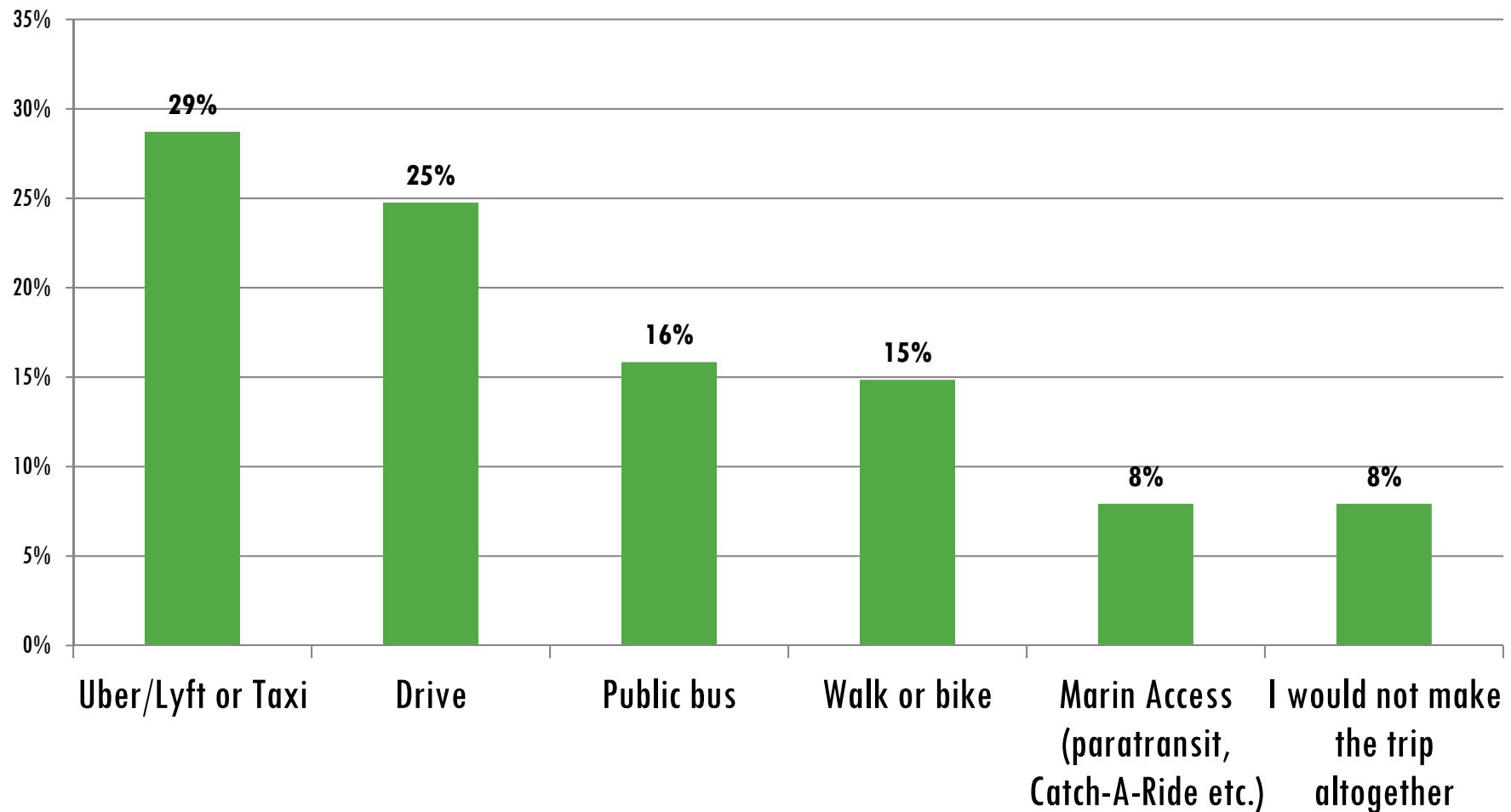
Source: 2018 Connect onboard rider survey

# Rider Profile — Transit Usage

- 7% had never used any form of public transportation prior to riding Connect — “New Transit Riders”
- 93% have used some form of transit prior to riding Connect
  - Over half use SMART, 38% exclusively
  - Only 33% used an existing Marin Transit service (bus or senior/ADA service)
  - 13% used Marin Access prior to using connect

# Rider Survey Results: Alternative Transportation Options

If the Connect service wasn't available, how would you complete your trip to get to your destination?

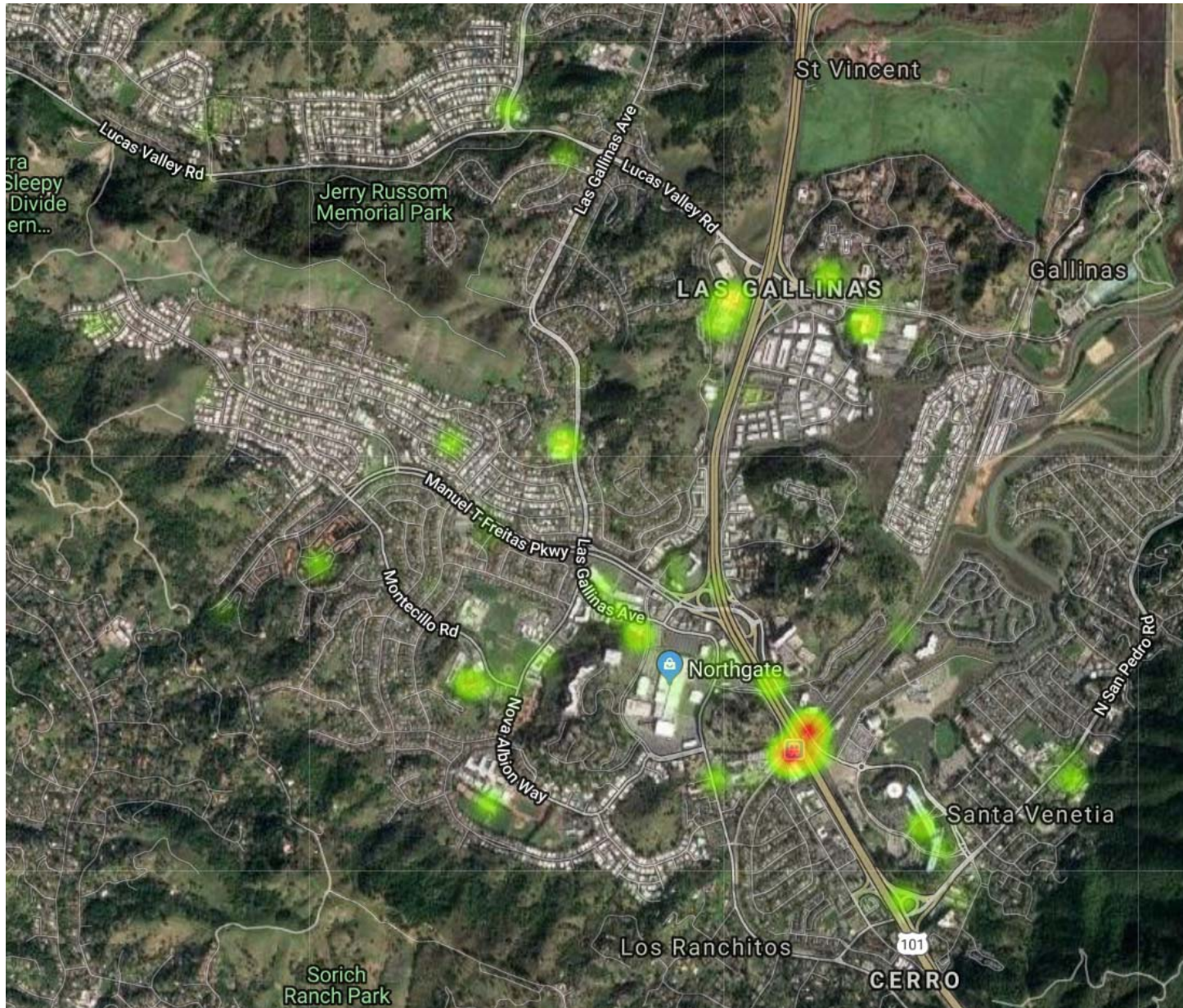




# Service Performance Trends

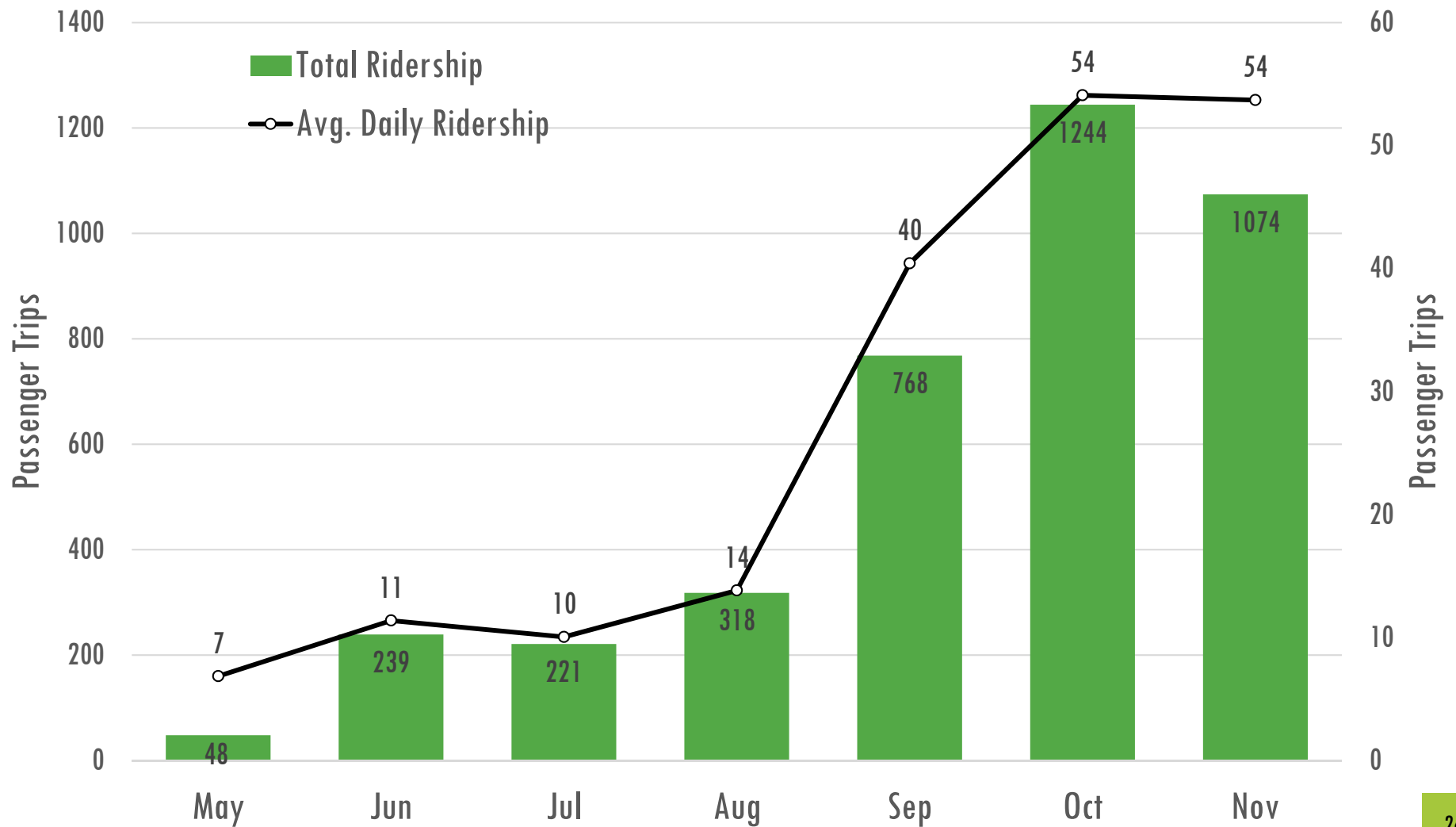
Average Wait Time for Pickup	7.4 minutes
% On Time Arrival for Pickup	85.7%
Average Trip Length (time)	7.5 minutes
Average Trip Length (distance)	1.1 miles

# Trip Origins



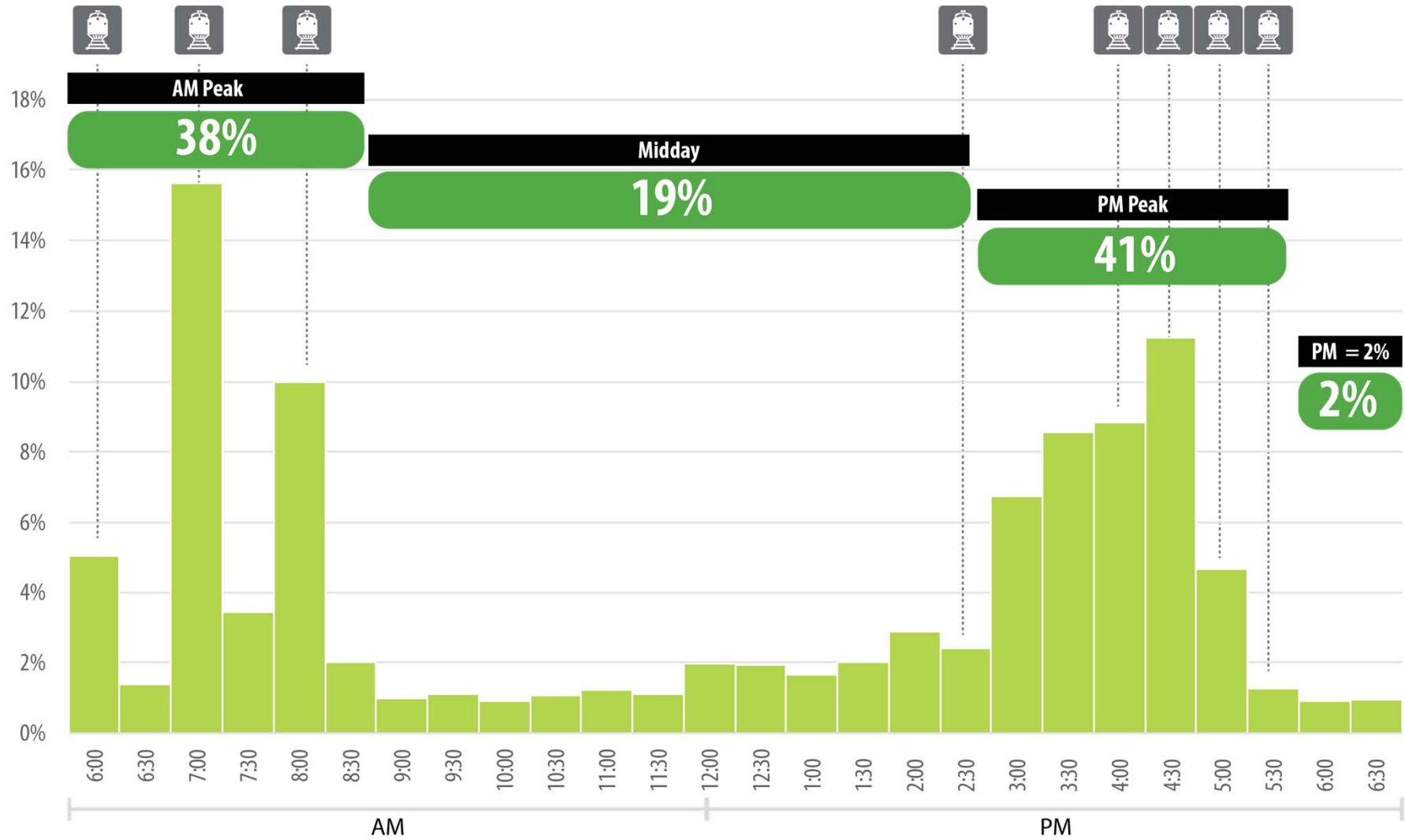
# Performance Trends - Ridership

**Ridership continues to increase.** Average daily ridership has increased or kept steady ever month since the start of service.



# When Do Rides Occur?

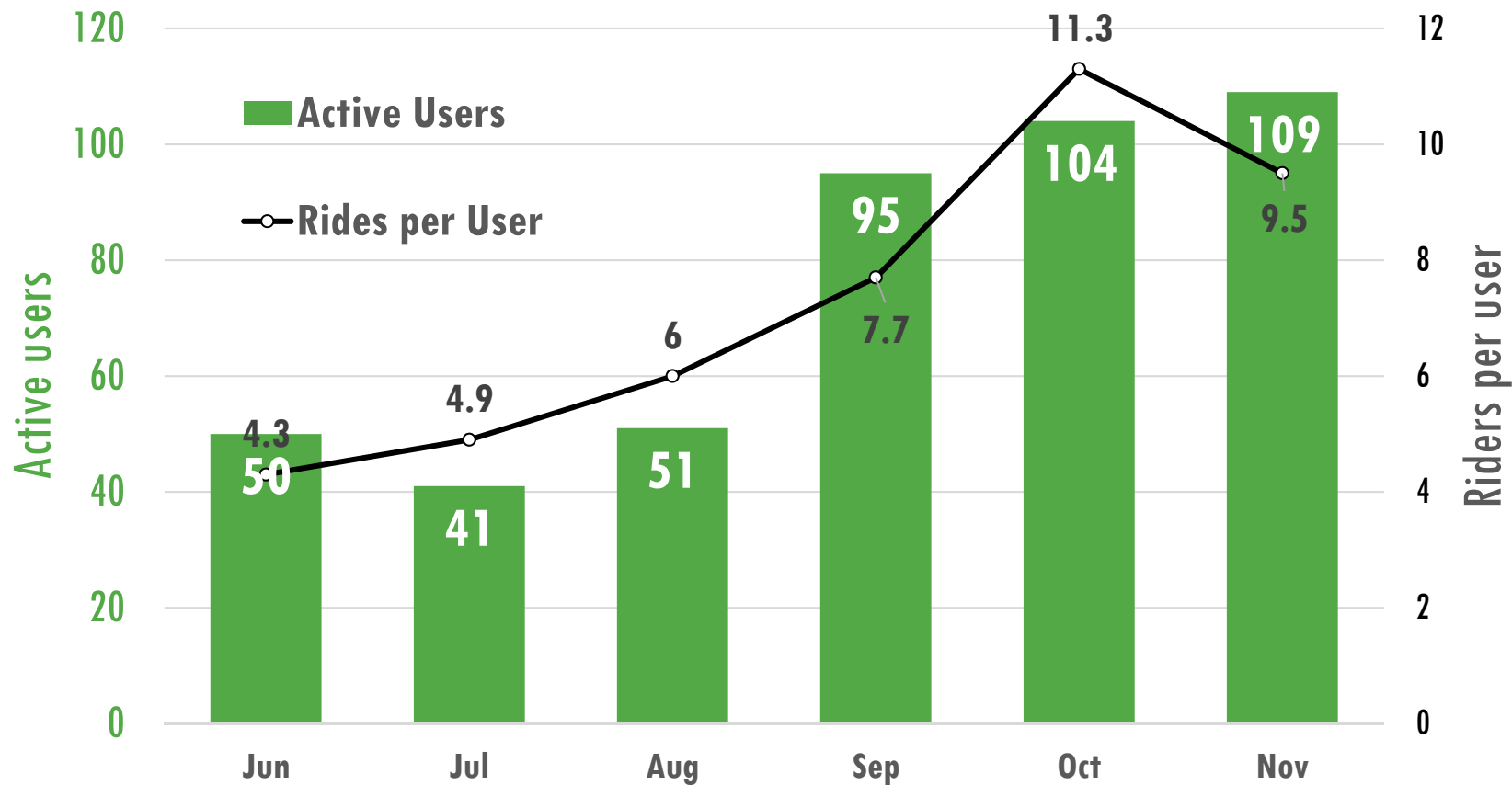
Most trips occur during the AM/PM peak hours.



 = SMART: AM SB arrivals / PM NB departures

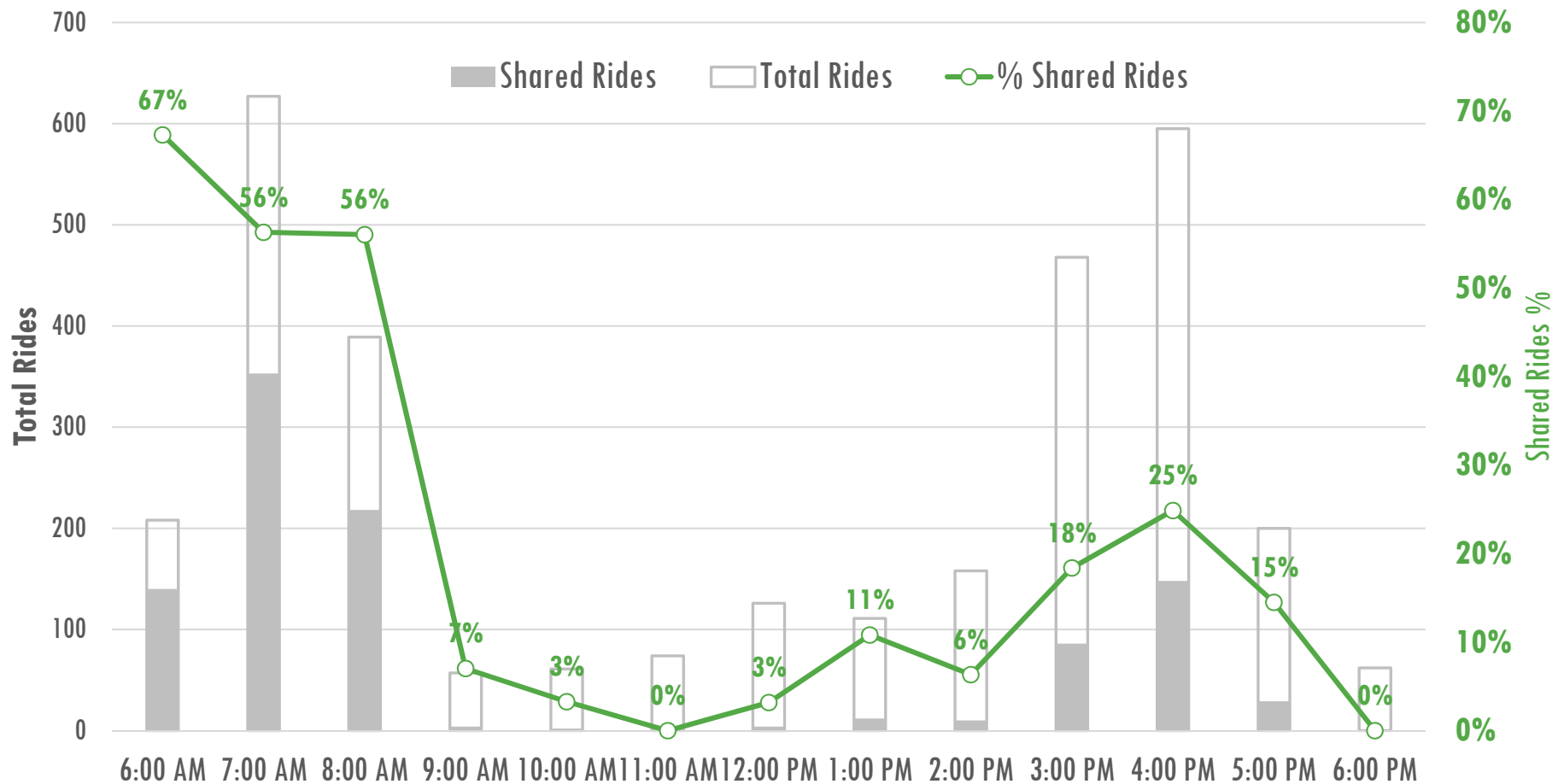
# Ridership Growth-Retention

**The service is retaining riders over time. The number of active users has increased each month, and they are taking more trips**



# Ridesharing by Time of Day

**Most rides are shared. AM rides have the highest % shared due to common origin trip requests associated with train station**



# Summary Findings

- Service is experiencing **ongoing growth**
- Over **75%** of trips occur during **AM/PM peak hours**
- Overall, **riders are satisfied** with the service
  - 90% surveyed responded as somewhat satisfied, satisfied, or very satisfied with the service
  - Nearly 90% of riders rated their ride as a 5 / 5 within the app following their trip
- Connect is not necessarily attracting a new public transit rider but is **attracting a new Marin Transit rider**
- If the service wasn't available, **29%** would take another on-demand service while **25%** would drive. **8%** would not make the trip altogether.
- Typical connect rider is a **higher income rider** compared to other fixed route services and **more likely to use SMART**
- The top requested change by both riders and non-riders is **service area expansion**

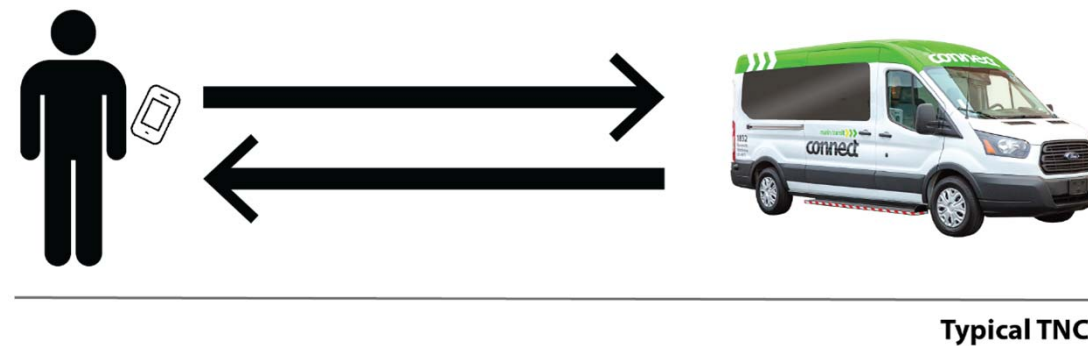
# Initial Lessons Learned

- New innovative programs require **additional resources**
  - New technology and training for drivers, dispatch, and schedulers
- Service development depends on **software development**
  - Ability for software to perform directly impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of service
- An app-based on-demand service **impacts how riders understand and begin to use the service**
  - Initial use is challenging, especially for transit riders who are used to set schedule/stops
  - Once riders use service, it is easier for them to understand



# Initial Lessons Learned (con't)

- An app-based service **changes operational roles and responsibilities**
  - Reduces pressure on scheduling department
  - Dispatch needs to provide customer service



- **Continued efforts to improve usage and utilization**
  - Constant monitoring and adjusting supply to meet demand
  - Targeting outreach and marketing to senior/ADA clients
  - General public mailer
  - Re-evaluate the service area
  - In-App promotional campaign to attract new riders to the service
- **Formal program evaluation in Summer of 2019**
  - Develop performance metrics and targets
  - Identify synergies/integration with other transit and transportation offerings

# Questions?

Robert Betts

Director of Operations & Planning, Marin Transit

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