

# MARIN TRANSIT PROPOSED SERVICE REDUCTION CHANGES FOR MARCH 2010

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

<http://www.marintransit.org> | [info@marintransit.org](mailto:info@marintransit.org) | 415-226-0855

### Why do we need to reduce service?

The funding necessary to provide transit service in Marin County comes from many sources. The majority (75%) of the funding comes from State and local sales tax revenues. Marin Transit has lost over \$2 million annually in Measure A Sales Tax, Property Tax, and State Transit Assistance annually due to the recent economic crisis. Combined with continually increasing service costs, these significant funding losses will lead to a \$16 million deficit over the next 10 years without service cuts. Fare increases alone cannot close the projected budget shortfalls. Therefore, Marin Transit is forced to reduce transit operation costs by making service adjustments.

### How did you decide what services to change and/or cut?

Marin Transit staff reviewed the performance of seven types of service that it provides. Local Service is the most expensive service to operate, and is the only service that has experienced a continuous decrease in ridership. All other services show ridership increases. As a result, Marin Transit decided to focus the service reduction strategy on the 12 Local Service routes. No service reductions are proposed for any of the other services provided by Marin Transit.<sup>1</sup>

### Why is my route being cut?

Once it was determined that the service reductions will be limited to the Local Service routes, Marin Transit staff reviewed the performance of each route. Routes performing well were targeted for minor or no reductions. Routes performing at or near productivity standards were eligible for frequency reductions or other minor reductions. Under-performing routes were eligible for span of service reductions and other significant reductions. At this time, no service reductions are proposed for supplemental school service, rural Stagecoach routes, shuttle routes, Novato Dial-A-Ride, or the Muir Woods seasonal service.

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<sup>1</sup> Marin Transit is not proposing to reduce the complementary paratransit budget. Mandated paratransit service will be reduced as determined by law, but the overall budget for providing service will continue to increase approximately 5% per year. This includes funding to continue to provide non-mandated trips whenever possible.

## What are the proposed reductions?

The proposed reductions affect 10 of the 12 local routes provided by Marin Transit. The table below summarizes the proposed changes for each of the 10 routes. No service reductions are proposed for any of the other services provided by Marin Transit.<sup>2</sup>

| Route |                          | Proposed Changes  |
|-------|--------------------------|---|
| 17    | Mill Valley – San Rafael | Weekday service hours would be reduced by 1 hour in the morning and 1 hour (NB) in the evening. Four midday trips that are not meeting performance standards would be discontinued. Saturday northbound service would be reduced by 1 hour. |
| 19    | Tiburon – Marin City     | Weekday and Weekend midday service between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm would be eliminated. Weekday, northbound service would be reduced by one evening hour and weekend southbound service would be reduced by one morning hour.                  |
| 22    | San Anselmo – Sausalito  | Weekday service would be reduced by one evening hour and 30 minutes in the morning northbound. Weekend northbound service would be reduced by one evening hour.   |
| 23    | Fairfax – San Rafael     | Weekday frequency reduced from 30 to 60 minutes. See Route 29 for new service between San Anselmo and Fairfax/Manor.  |
| 29    | San Anselmo – San Rafael | Route is extended from San Anselmo to Fairfax and Manor.  |
| 36    | Canal – SRTC- Marin City | The last southbound evening trip would be discontinued.   |
| 45    | SRTC – Terra Linda       | Weekday service would be reduced by one morning hour and one trip northbound in the evening. Weekend service would be reduced by the first southbound morning trip.   |
| 49    | SRTC – Hamilton          | Weekday service would be reduced by one evening hour. Alternative service from Northgate Mall is available on Route 45.   |
| 51    | Novato                   | Weekday evening service would be reduced by one evening hour.   |
| 52    | Novato – San Rafael      | Weekend evening service would be reduced one morning hour and one evening hour.   |

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<sup>2</sup> Marin Transit is not proposing to reduce the complementary paratransit budget. Mandated paratransit service will be reduced as determined by law, but the overall budget for providing service will continue to increase approximately 5% per year. This includes funding to continue to provide non-mandated trips whenever possible.

## How can I get more information?

- Visit our website at <http://www.marintransit.org>
- Attend a public meeting (see website or call for dates)
- Email [info@marintransit.org](mailto:info@marintransit.org)
- Call 415-226-0855
- Attend a board meeting or watch on the web (<http://www.marintransit.org/board.html>)
- [Join](#) our email list (see website).
- Follow us on [twitter](#)
- Find us on facebook.

## How can I make comments about the proposed changes?

Participate in a public meeting, attend the board hearing on November 16, call 415-226-0855, submit written comments via email to [info@marintransit.org](mailto:info@marintransit.org), or submit written comments to:

Marin Transit, Service Reduction Comments  
750 Lindero Street, #200  
San Rafael, CA 94901

The last day to submit public comments is November 6, 2009.

The public hearing will be held on November 16, 2009 at 10:00 am at the regular meeting of the Marin Transit Board of Directors, located in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, Room 330, at the Marin County Civic Center in San Rafael.

## Why is there a budget deficit and how much is it?

The budget deficit is primarily the result of unprecedented cuts in state funding and a decline in sales-tax and property-tax revenue due to the recession. The majority (75%) of the funding to provide Marin Transit services comes from State and local tax revenues. Marin Transit has lost over \$2 million in Measure Sales Tax, Property Tax and State Transit Assistance annually due to the recent economic crisis. Combined with continually increasing service costs, these significant funding losses will lead to a \$16 million deficit over the next 10 years if service is not reduced.

## What happened with the state funding?

The state has taken \$250,000 dollars from Marin Transit's property tax dollars for fiscal year 2009/2010, and there was a 14% reduction in sales tax revenue between fiscal years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. It is unclear when State transit revenues will be available due to the State budget crisis.

## Voter's passed Measure A transportation sales tax in 2004. Why isn't this enough?

Measure A sales tax typically provides 40% of Marin Transit's operating budget. Due to the recession, there was a 14% reduction in sales tax revenue between fiscal years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, and this trend is projected to continue into future years. At the same time that revenues are declining, bus operating costs continue to rise. Local sales tax revenues will continue to maintain the other services that Marin Transit provides, including the supplemental school service, West Marin Stagecoach, Community Shuttles, Novato Dial-a-Ride, and Muir Woods Shuttles.

## Isn't Marin Transit getting federal stimulus money?

Marin Transit received federal stimulus money to fund four projects this year, for a total of \$1.2 million dollars. The money available through the federal stimulus program is specifically available for capital improvement projects and cannot be spent on transit operations (such as maintenance, fuel, or salaries). Marin Transit is using the federal stimulus money to fund two types of capital projects: one that includes purchasing new vehicles, which will reduce maintenance and operating costs, and one that includes purchasing and installing information-based systems which will help Marin Transit services be more reliable for our customers and will provide information that will help staff make better planning decisions in the future.

## Can't Marin Transit reduce expenses without cutting service?

Marin Transit is a lean organization that consists of only six full-time County employees and two grant-funded contract employees. There are few opportunities to reduce expenses in an organization of this size while continuing to complete the tasks that are necessary to maintain operation of a transit agency. Even through efficient use of remaining state funds and grant funds, it is not possible to close the projected budget shortfalls without reducing the services that we provide.

## What kind of public outreach efforts are you going to undertake before you decide on service cuts?

Marin Transit invites the public to review an comment on the proposed service reductions. Our public outreach plan includes:

- Conducting four public meetings in Northern, Central, and Southern Marin (see website or call for dates)

- Conducting a public hearing on November 16, 2009
- Posting flyers at major bus stops
- Publishing press releases in local newspapers
- Posting information on the Marin Transit website, Facebook page, and Twitter page
- Posting flyers at local libraries
- Putting posters on buses and shuttles
- Sending information via email

## Why is Marin Transit still spending money to purchase new buses if there is a deficit?

The money used to purchase new buses is specifically available for that purpose (known as “capital improvements”) and cannot be spent on transit operations (such as maintenance, fuel, or salaries). Marin Transit typically replaces buses when they are at the end of their “useful service life”, which is a proactive way to keep maintenance costs down.

## What is a service frequency reduction?

“Frequency” is a transit term that defines how many times per hour a bus arrives at a bus stop. A service frequency reduction is one where certain bus trips are discontinued, resulting in a longer time between when buses arrive at a bus stop.

## What is a span of service reduction?

“Span of Service” is a transit term that defines how long transit service is provided over the course of a day from the time of the first bus in the morning to the last bus at night. A span of service reduction is one where either early morning and/or late evening bus trips are discontinued.

## What are the performance measures Marin Transit uses to evaluate transit service?

Marin Transit uses productivity standards to evaluate transit service on route and trip levels. These service standards are shown in the table below and can also be found in the *2009 Short Range Transit Plan*.

| Service Type               | Passengers per Hour | Subsidy per Passenger Trip |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Large Bus Fixed Route      | 20                  | \$5                        |
| Community Shuttles         | 7                   | \$8                        |
| Rural Fixed Route          | 4                   | \$12                       |
| Supplemental School Routes | 20 per trip         | \$4                        |
| Paratransit/Special Needs  | 2                   | \$30                       |

## Are other transit agencies around the country experiencing similar financial troubles?

The funding crisis is a widespread problem that is impacting transit agencies around the country, both large and small. A survey of transit agencies conducted in 2009 (*Stranded at the Station – The Impact of the Financial Crisis in Public Transportation*, Transportation for America and Nelson Nygaard, August 2009) identified 97 transit operators of which 34 are proposing service reductions, 36 are proposing fare increases, and 27 are proposing service reductions and fare increases. Listed below are examples of several Bay Area transit agencies who have announced service reductions. The 8% service reduction proposed by Marin Transit is within the range of what other agencies are proposing:

- AC Transit (Contra Costa County) – 15% service reduction
- Regional Transit (Sacramento) – 9.4% to 12.5% service reduction
- County Express (Hollister) – 35% service reduction
- VTA (Santa Clara) – 8.3% service reduction (bus), 6.5% service reduction (light rail)
- Sonoma County Transit – 15% service reduction