



Chapter 4: Marketing Plan

In March 2008, Marin Transit completed a strategic marketing plan. The plan identifies objectives, target markets, and specific strategies for enhancing the system’s image and ridership. The plan was based on the findings of a market assessment, undertaken in November 2007 that included interviews with focus groups and a review of existing marketing materials and services. This chapter gives a brief overview of Marin Transit’s marketing plan.

Marin Transit’s marketing objectives are to:

- Build awareness among Marin County residents of the entire “family” of Marin Transit services;
- Improve the “ease” of understanding and using transit in Marin County;
- Improve the customer experience for all Marin County local transit riders; and
- Conduct targeted marketing efforts to build ridership among segments with the greatest potential to benefit from transit usage.

Figure 4-1 Marin Transit Marketing Projects and Schedule

Fiscal Year	Project Implementation
2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Brand Golden Gate operated vehicles • Update Marin Transit Website
2009-2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new fare media • Create Marin Transit System Map • Install Marin Transit Bus Stop Blades
2010 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve schedule/route information at major bus stop locations • Initiate targeted marketing campaigns • Improve trip planning & telephone service

Co-Brand Services

Marin Transit operates a variety of different services using multiple contractors. Marin Transit’s strategy is to co-brand all local services as “a service of Marin Transit.” In the Spring of 2007, Marin County Transit District adopted the name “Marin Transit” and approved a new logo. This logo will be used to identify vehicles, bus stops, passenger information, and promotional materials for all services funded by Marin County.



Vehicle Branding

Community Shuttles and West Marin Stagecoach vehicles and schedules now include the Marin Transit branding. Marin Transit logos are also on the 10 new articulated buses operated by Golden Gate on Route 35 service in the Canal area of San Rafael and on Route 36 and Route 71 Highway 101 service. In 2009, Marin Transit expects to add the Marin Transit logo to the remaining Golden Gate Transit vehicles that operate on local routes.

Bus Stop Signage

Bus stops provide an extremely visible and pervasive channel for communication of the Marin Transit brand. Stops used for local service need bus stop signs with the Marin Transit log and route information. Marin Transit will be working on the design and installation of new blades in 2009.

Passenger Guides and Promotional Materials

All Marin Transit local fixed routes, including the Community Shuttles and West Marin Stagecoach, are included in the Transit Guide produced by Golden Gate Transit every quarter. Marin Transit routes are identified by our logo and text on the schedule pages.

Enhance Passenger Information

According to our focus group research, local transit service in Marin County has been perceived by potential riders (and even some current riders) as challenging to understand and use. Improving passenger information will address both the reality and the perception of ease of use.

Improve Paper Maps and Schedules

Marin Transit will create a promotional and informational system map that encompasses all Marin Transit services. This fold out map will clearly show all local routes on one side and, on the other side, will provide routes descriptions with major destinations and service spans.

Marin Transit will continue to produce individual route schedules for Community Shuttles and the West Marin Stagecoach. Individual route maps may also be needed for some local routes operated by Golden Gate Transit.



Enhance Bus Stop Signage Information

In addition to an opportunity for branding, bus stops are an important channel for providing passengers with route and schedule information. Information at the bus stops was one of the lowest rated service aspects in a 2005 on-board survey conducted by the agency.

The majority of local stops are signed with the basic Golden Gate Transit sign which consists of only a logo and the word "BUS." Many of the bus stops also include a custom sign, showing which routes serve the stop. However, these signs include neither the hours of service nor a schedule.

Marin Transit has installed sign cases with complete schedules and maps at all Community Shuttle and West Marin Stagecoach stops. Marin Transit will pursue options to add additional schedule information for all local bus service at high use stops. Due to the number of stops and frequency of schedule changes (4 times a year), a less time-demanding process to update this information needs to be developed in partnership with Golden Gate Transit.

Enhance Marin Transit Website

The internet is an increasingly important source of information for transit users. Marin Transit's website is being redesigned with the Marin County transit user as the primary target audience. The site will be designed to provide more "user friendly" information (*how to get where I am going*), with a minimum amount of searching. Specific strategies to achieve this include:

- Creating an interactive map;
- Organizing information by destination, not provider;
- Creating menu driven quick access to all routes and schedules;
- Providing multi-lingual information;
- Allow rider registration;
- Adding real time information when available; and
- Providing information in accessible formats.

Marin Transit expects to launch the first phase of the website redesign in the Spring of 2009.



Implement Additional Fare Media

Most transit riders in Marin County pay their fare in cash despite using the transit system intensively, often several times a day. Different fare media can be introduced to encourage frequent transit use and better serve the transit dependent population. The Marin Transit Board adopted new fare media options in July 2008, as recommended in the 2006 Short Range Transit Plan and re-emphasized in the strategic marketing plan. Chapter 1 of this SRTP includes detailed information about the current fare media and newly adopted fare policies.

Advertising Campaigns

The marketing plan identified targeted advertising campaigns focused on increasing ridership on existing local services. Identified campaigns are oriented towards:

- *Youth Riders;*
- *Recreation Riders;*
- *Corridor Campaigns;*
- *Hispanic Riders;*
- *Commuter Campaigns;*
- *Senior Riders;*
- *Riders with Disabilities; and*
- *College Students.*