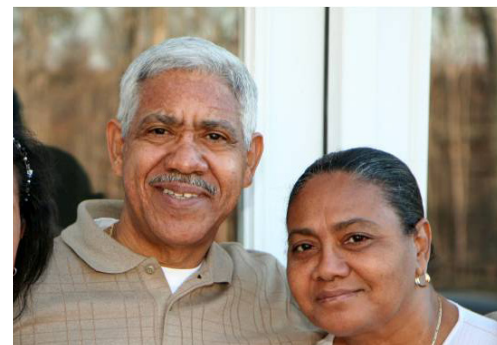
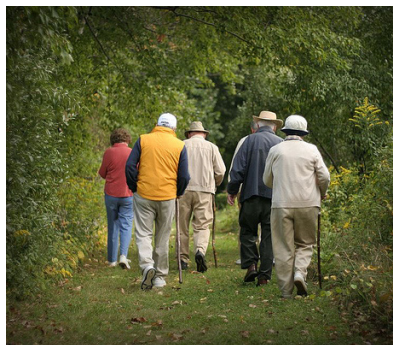


Marin County Division of Aging & Adult Services and Marin Transit
SENIOR MOBILITY ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
**STRATEGIES AND
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**



Marin County Senior Mobility and Implementation Plan Advisory Panel

We would like to thank the Advisory Panel and team who worked with us on this project.

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Introduction

In partnership with Marin Transit and other community agencies, the Marin County Health and Human Services Department, Division of Aging and Adult Services has sponsored the Marin Senior Mobility Action and Implementation Plan to identify measures that can be taken by Marin County and transportation agencies to support the mobility of the growing older population beyond their driving years. The Plan is a joint effort to keep older people safe and connected to their communities as problems related to aging make it harder for them to get around. The purpose of this report is to identify the major gaps in transportation services to older adults in Marin County and to develop specific strategies to close those gaps.

The report is in two volumes: the first is the Existing Conditions Report, which looks at current and future demographics in Marin, describes the current state of senior transportation, presents examples of best practices in senior mobility, reports on outreach activities conducted as part of this project, and identifies transportation gaps in Marin.

This document is the second volume, the “Action and Implementation Plan”, which discusses in detail strategies proposed to meet the transportation needs of older adults in Marin County, identified through the research and outreach conducted for this project.

Criteria used to prioritize the strategies, agreed on by the team and Advisory Panel, are reviewed. The strategies are divided into Tier I – likely to be implemented, or already in the pilot stage; and Tier II strategies, which, while meeting the needs of some groups of older adults, may be more difficult to implement due to various reasons. The discussion of each strategy includes implementation steps and recommendations for funding opportunities. Following the strategy discussion are recommendations for near-term steps to implement the strategies.

Marin Mobility Strategies

Through the public outreach process described previously, strategies were identified to meet the mobility needs for Marin residents. These strategies supplemented some that are already being implemented in the County. Both existing and proposed strategy designs were further refined through the focus group process, and evaluated using objective criteria, to determine the highest priority strategies to pursue. These criteria are described in the next section.

Transportation Strategy Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria were used as a guide for evaluating strategies based on the transportation gaps identified in this project. These criteria were reviewed and approved by the Advisory Panel, and applied by the consultant staff.

The criteria are intended to be flexible, so that differences among different communities can be taken into account. The order of presentation does not correspond to order of importance—no one category is considered more important than the others.

These criteria may also be used to evaluate projects resulting from the strategies arrived at through this process, and the criteria below use the terms “strategy” and “project” interchangeably. In

evaluating projects, specific funding requirements for particular sources may also have to be considered. For example, New Freedom funds must support new public transportation services and new public transportation alternatives that exceed the requirements of the ADA and “must (1) be targeted toward individuals with disabilities; and (2) meet the intent of the program by removing barriers to transportation and assisting persons with disabilities with transportation, including transportation to and from jobs and employment services.” (FTA C 9045.1, May 1, 2007.) Thus projects meeting these requirements might be ranked more highly than those that did not.

Financial Criteria

Cost: Is the overall cost within a range that can realistically be funded with available sources, taking into account grants from the private or public sector or user fares/fees?

Cost per beneficiary: A broad range of a small to a large number of beneficiaries is compared to the cost of a program. Even though a program's total cost is low, if it reaches very few people it might still have a high cost per beneficiary. This would not necessarily eliminate a project from consideration if it ranked highly on other criteria including those listed under “Transportation Benefits Criteria” and “Community Criteria.” Similarly, even though a program's total cost is high, if it reaches many people it might still have a low cost per beneficiary.

Funding availability and sustainability: To the degree possible, strategies and related projects should have stable sources of funding to cover match requirements. In the case of pilot, demonstration, or capital projects, there should be reasonable likelihood of continued funding for operations. It is recognized that continued funding can never be guaranteed, as it is subject to budget processes, as well as decisions and priorities of funders.

Leveraging resources: It is desirable for strategies and projects to help tap into other funding sources, especially new sources not previously available. Displacing existing funding is discouraged.

Implementation Criteria

Implementation time-frame: Strategies that will produce results quickly are preferred, as long as they are also sustainable. Projects with long-term payoffs should have some form of measurable accomplishments in the short run.

Staging: Can the improvement be implemented in stages?

Coordination: Strategies that involve coordination, for example multiple organizations working together to address a need, are desirable.

Transportation Benefits Criteria

Number of problems and trip types: Strategies that address multiple problems and serve multiple customer groups and trip purposes are preferred.

Number of beneficiaries: In general, improvements that benefit many people are preferred to those that benefit few. However, the needs of relatively small groups might be considered particularly critical based on criteria under the heading “Community.”

Unserviced needs: Projects are preferred that address gaps left by other services rather than duplicating, overlapping with, or competing with other services. Note that the relative importance of various needs is a matter for local priorities as addressed under “Community.”

Measurable benefits: As much as possible, there should be ways to measure how a strategy is benefiting target groups, whether in terms of numbers of people served, numbers of trips provided, improved measures of service quality, etc.

Community Criteria

Community support: Community support may take the form of formal endorsement by organizations and individuals, support by elected governing bodies, a potential project sponsor (“champion”) with staff or vehicles, and connections to adopted plans to carry out the strategy.

Acceptability: While a strategy may look good “on paper”, there may be more subtle reasons – for example, cultural, practical, or financial – that it would not be successful if implemented. The strategy must be acceptable to the target population. That is, will the target population actually use this service being offered?

Acute needs: The importance of needs will normally be reflected in community support, but also in priority designation in locally-adopted plans or policies. Acute needs may include needs of small groups who have been left unserved by other programs due to expense or other difficulties.

Unserviced groups: Identifiable groups that are not able to use existing services may include people who face language and cultural barriers.

Strategies for Marin Senior Mobility

Actions have been identified to address transportation faced by seniors based on suggestions by workshop and focus group participants, input from the Advisory Panel, and best practices from other locations. Implementation of these strategies will require coordination and partnership between county agencies and Marin’s cities, transit agencies, community organizations, state and federal agencies, and private citizens.

Based on the criteria above, strategies were divided into Tier I and Tier II strategies. Ten Tier I strategies are briefly summarized in a matrix on the following page, followed by a longer description for each strategy, including the objective of the strategy, potential roles and partnerships, implementation steps, and funding. Following this section, Tier II strategies are also briefly described.

As noted above under Financial Criteria, funding for public transportation is never guaranteed. While funding sources are suggested for each strategy, it should be noted that federal transportation law will be rewritten in 2011. As a result of that process, federal funds, including New Freedom Funds, may not be continued.

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Figure 1 Senior Mobility Action Plan – Summary Matrix of Mobility Strategies

Tier I Strategy	Need Addressed	Potential Lead or Participating Agencies	Potential Funding Sources	Next Steps
Transit-based Strategies				
1. Community Bus for Seniors Local fixed-route shuttles to serve short trips within communities. Open to all with emphasis on seniors.	Brings transit closer to seniors who live too far from transit to walk.	Marin Transit, cities wanting local service Also: SMART (shuttles), Kaiser	5310 Capital funding for vehicles 5217 New Freedom Funds	Inventory existing shuttles Identify routes Develop pilot service
2. Flexible Transit Services Fixed-route services that will deviate on request	Brings transit closer to seniors who live too far from transit to walk.	Marin Transit, cities wanting local service, senior centers and housing	Partnership with senior centers 5317 New Freedom Funds Area Agency on Aging	Identify likely origins and destinations near but not on transit routes Market to residents and businesses
Walkable Communities				
3. Walkable Communities for Seniors Identify priority improvements in neighborhoods with high concentrations of seniors and walkable destinations; Utilize ADA transition plans as foundational project lists.	Safe walking access to transit and neighborhood destinations	Marin County Commission on Aging County ADA Compliance Manager Marin County DOAAS DPWs of Marin communities Citizen groups	Caltrans NMTTP Reauthorization FTA 5310 / funding swap for local dollars Public/private partnerships SR2S and TLC funds from MTC	Inventory ADA Transition plans Develop senior-oriented prioritization criteria for repairs to sidewalks Develop consensus on criteria Inventory sites Prioritize and make repairs
Demand-Response Service				
4. Subsidized Taxicabs Build on results of current subsidized taxi pilot program.	Low-income seniors cannot afford market-rate taxis.	Marin Transit / Office of Mobility Management	5317 New Freedom Funds	In progress; next steps include: Assess results of pilot, including pricing, choice of communities, marketing methods
5. Community-Based Volunteer Driver Program Continue efforts to establish non-profit, community transportation network with public and private funding. An alternative to Whistlestop Wheels for seniors who can't drive or use transit.	Non-driving seniors may not be able to get to transit, or transit may not serve their destination.	Marin Transit / Mobility Manager Local community organizations Cities	New Freedom Funds have been granted for 2011 Lifeline Transportation Program (MTC) Area Agency on Aging	Once funding is received: - identify non-profit to administer program - determine reservation system - develop plan for recruitment and training of volunteers - publicize

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Tier I Strategy	Need Addressed	Potential Lead or Participating Agencies	Potential Funding Sources	Next Steps
Information				
6. Encouraging Use of Transit "Try Transit" brochure and promotions, video, organized trips, tailored service descriptions. Communicate to seniors that transit is safe, modern, senior-friendly, and provides independence.	Older people who have always driven may be reluctant to use public transit, even when it is available and they are physically able.	Marin Transit Cities / communities Senior centers, senior housing	Sponsorship by health care organizations Marin Transit marketing funds	Identify a lead coordinating agency Prioritize programs Partner with others for in-kind or funding assistance Develop marketing plans for participatory programs
7. Safe Driving Driver training, driving retirement, adapting cars for older drivers. Older Driver Wellness Program	Older adults who stop driving prematurely have limited mobility and may not be aware of their options.	Training providers, healthcare providers CA Department of Motor Vehicles	Minimal, Marin Community Foundation	Identify programs Publicize through existing related County web sites, regular senior-focused meetings
8. Information & Assistance As part of Mobility Management function, multi-modal telephone information, web site, literature distribution, seminar hosting for agency staff that work with older people.	Older people are not always aware of the full range of their available transportation options.	In process through Marin Transit / Paratransit Program, Special Needs Services	Could be minimal; New Freedom Funds	Research other programs for framework appropriate to Marin Identify lead and partner agencies funding needs and resources Execute partnership agreements and hire or designate staffing
9. Walking Groups for Seniors Coordinated groups, possibly organized around senior center or culturally based organizations, include accessibility audits of path-of-travel	Seniors may not feel comfortable walking alone and would be supported through walking groups.	Marin County (Walk Bike Marin)	Minimal, Marin Community Foundation	Work with WalkBikeMarin to add senior walking info to their site Contact senior organizations for walking group info Present info through senior clubs
Planning Policies				
10. Planning Policies for Senior Housing Planning reviews for senior housing and other senior-related facilities should require close-in locations and a transportation element.	Current policies regarding the location of senior housing and other facilities are inconsistent and do not necessarily take mobility into account	Marin County Commission on Aging, Marin County Community Development Marin Community Foundation	Minimal	Research / document policies on locating senior housing in Marin Propose policies to incentivize placement in walkable areas Develop outreach strategy to reach decision-makers Draft sample policy language

Strategy 1: Community Bus for Seniors

Transportation Needs Addressed

Golden Gate Transit and Marin local service can be difficult or time consuming to use for local trips within communities. Bus service in the hills and in neighborhoods is generally less frequent than main line service. Seniors in particular may have difficulty walking the distance to a bus stop and waiting. Neighborhoods can be difficult to serve with large buses and may produce limited ridership.

Project Objectives and Description

Community bus services follow fixed routes and are designed to provide door-to-door service. They would accommodate short distance trips within communities, linking senior housing and centers to shopping, regional bus and ferry services. The emphasis in service design is on improving proximity, rather than minimizing ride times as in conventional transit services. Small buses or vans would be utilized on routes designed to connect local points of interest and reduce walking distances to access service. There should be provision for trips between cities, whether by means of coordinated service involving two or more cities or by means of connections at transit hubs. Service would be available to the general public but designed and marketed with an emphasis on seniors. In some communities, service may include demand-responsive deviations. Fares may be charged but should not be a barrier to usage, whether financially or through inconvenience of fare media.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Cities: Establish service design and priorities; contribute to funding; market locally.

Marin Transit: Coordination, technical assistance, planning, marketing in coordination with regional services. (Note that Marin Transit has no funds at this time to cost-share or provide community buses.)

SMART Shuttles: SMART, a commuter rail service now in the planning stages, intends to provide shuttles between their stations and communities along major corridors. Focused on morning and evening work trips, there may be potential for adding mid-day senior-oriented service.

Medical facilities: Kaiser Permanente has shown interest in a shuttle service to bring patients to their facility in Terra Linda. This might establish the start of a larger shuttle system for seniors.

Implementation Steps

- Inventory existing shuttles, including those operated by cities, Marin Transit, and private institutions and employers to identify under-served senior locations and establish service parameters (service area, users and user requirements, vehicle ownership and management, funding and fares), potential service enhancements, and opportunities for coordination and improved cost effectiveness.

- Identify routes not currently served by transit which would connect origins and destinations of interest to seniors.
- Develop pilot services in some cities and secure funding or execute MOUs, if necessary.
- Establish a countywide community bus plan to enhance coordination and funding opportunities.
- Expand services.

Funding

Funding for this strategy would come from new sources as Marin Transit does not have funds to provide or share costs on this service.

- FTA Section 5310, Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program funds, can be used for capital projects such as vehicles
- FTA Section 5317 New Freedom funds may be used for this type of service

Strategy 2: Flexible Transit Services

Transportation Needs Addressed

The distance between home and transit, and transit and one's destination (sometimes referred to as the "last mile" problem) can present a barrier to seniors who would be willing to take public transit, but can't walk the required distances.

Project Objectives and Description

Flexible, or "route-deviation" service, is typically a hybrid configuration adapting features of both fixed route and fixed schedule transit systems as well as demand-responsive curb-to-curb systems. Riders can request that the route deviate, either for pick-up or drop-off, within a specified distance. After accommodating off-route requests, the vehicle returns to the stop at which the deviation started (or in some systems, the next stop) and continues along the advertised route. Often these services use same-day or previous-day reservations for pick-ups, while riders can request deviations to be dropped off while on board the vehicle. Flexible systems often will also pick up passengers when flagged down along the route in a safe place.

Deviations can be limited in distance, from one block to several miles in more rural areas. In addition, they can be limited to non-peak hours so that deviations do not impact commuters.

This kind of service can provide needed mobility for those who otherwise could not use transit; however, it can also result in slightly longer travel times for passengers not requesting deviations. Adequate flexibility should be built into the schedule so that the bus can continue to run on time. Allowing "standing orders" for pickups and drop-offs can reduce the schedule uncertainty for these systems.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Marin Transit: Deviation routes would most likely be Marin Transit local routes other than the West Marin Stagecoach, which already deviates to pick up ADA-eligible passengers if arranged the prior day.

Cities: Contribute to service design and priorities; contribute to funding; market locally.

Senior Centers/Healthcare Facilities: Contribute financially to the incremental increase in cost to serve their facility.

Implementation Steps

- Identify senior housing, senior centers, and likely destinations near but not on existing routes.
- Market the flex services to residents and senior-serving businesses and agencies along the bus route .

Funding

Since these are existing routes that are deviating, funding would be needed to cover the incremental cost of providing additional hours of service to accommodate the deviations.

- Senior centers served through the deviated service may be willing to partner on the incremental cost of service.
- 5317 New Freedom Funds can be applied to assist individuals with disabilities in accessing transit, and may be applicable for the extra operations cost for deviation.
- The Area Agency on Aging may have funds that could be used for this service.

Strategy 3: Walkable Communities for Seniors

Transportation Needs Addressed

In Marin County, walking for recreational and utilitarian trips as well as to access transit is limited in communities designed with an orientation to the auto as the primary means of transportation. This suburban building pattern typically places housing far from local stores, services, and transit. The ability of older adults to walk (or go by wheelchair) to local stores and services is often limited by issues such as:

- lack of sidewalks or pedestrian pathways
- poorly maintained sidewalks
- lack of pedestrian amenities such as benches and street trees
- lack of or substandard curb ramps
- inconvenient or inaccessible transit stop and transit facilities with respect to key destinations for seniors

- short signalized crossing times
- widely spaced or inconveniently located marked crosswalks
- high speed traffic and wide intersections/crossings (often without median refuges)
- failure of drivers to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in crosswalks
- confusing intersections or signal phasing (especially when pedestrian push button use is required), and
- concerns for personal security when walking in some areas

Better walking conditions could improve access to goods and services and transit, and support increased physical activity, with benefits for health and driving ability.

Marin County has prioritized accessibility of County buildings as a key initiative, and budgets \$3 million annually for this effort. Outside of County property, wherever road work is done, sidewalks are improved to ADA standard. In addition, the Safe Routes to School program upgrades sidewalks to ADA standards. Marin County was a grantee in the Federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Project (NMTTP) and received approximately \$25 million to build bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

Project Objectives and Description

Federal regulations require jurisdictions to develop ADA Transition plans to guide upgrading of streets and sidewalks to ADA standards. The plans are required to name an official responsible for implementation, list structural modifications needed in facilities, and indicate when these changes will be accomplished. New or updated ADA Transition Plans offer an opportunity to strategically enhance pedestrian accommodations for seniors.

Many jurisdictions are also developing “complete streets” policies and implementation plans to institutionalize the accommodation of all modes and all users into routine maintenance and roadway design efforts.

Finally, the growing movement of “Safe Routes for Seniors” offers an opportunity to target funding and education, enforcement, engineering, and encouragement strategies to benefit seniors who choose to walk and bike.

As a first step, the ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plans for Marin County as well as the communities within Marin would be inventoried and their status determined. A set of guidelines for priorities for future ADA updates would be developed that emphasize creating “complete streets” in areas near senior housing, senior centers, and routes connecting these locations with popular destinations (pharmacies, libraries, shopping, post offices) as well as transit. Data gathered for this report showing collisions between senior pedestrians and vehicles would also be factored into the priorities.

Moving beyond the Transition Plan context, the County would develop a “complete streets” or routine accommodations policy and also establish a Safe Routes for Seniors program. An ongoing stakeholder collaboration effort may include establishing a reporting/feedback process to encourage seniors to “self-evaluate” pedestrian conditions in the County.

Envisioned projects to enhance pedestrian facilities would include installation of/ upgrade curb ramps, driveway cross slope mitigations, countdown pedestrian signals and extended signal phasing, bulbouts, median refuge islands, sidewalk repair, benches and street trees, and connecting sidewalks where there are gaps. The County would also collaborate with Marin Transit to review bus stop locations and relocate bus stops where feasible to better serve key destinations for seniors.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

The Marin County Commission on Aging: This advisory council may play a role in conducting an inventory of sites.

County ADA Compliance Manager: Conduct the inventory of ADA plans; develop draft and final prioritization criteria; coordinate among other agencies and jurisdictions

Marin County DOAAS Represent the needs of seniors in developing priorities. Develop training materials for residents to evaluate walking conditions and facilities.

Cities: City departments, Departments of Public Works (DPWs) in particular, would provide relevant traffic engineering expertise, and program those improvements that can be implemented with available funds. Cities can also enforce the ADA requirement that when a business is remodeled, sidewalks must be brought into compliance.

Neighborhood associations, community groups, and senior organizations: Organize residents to evaluate conditions and prioritize desired improvements, to be reported to the DPWs of the jurisdictions.

Implementation Steps

- Inventory the ADA Transition plans for Marin County jurisdictions
- Develop senior-oriented criteria for prioritization of ADA-required repairs to sidewalks and intersections
- Work with Marin County jurisdictions to get consensus on prioritization criteria
- Inventory the sites
- Marin County and cities within Marin would then prioritize repairs and upgrades within their jurisdictions based on agreed-on criteria

Funding

- Caltrans may be a source of funding or may implement requested sidewalk gap closure projects on State routes.
- If the NMTTP is reauthorized, this would be a likely source for funding to improve pedestrian access and amenities near senior centers and senior housing FTA Section 5310 funds capital projects focused on the elderly and disabled, so this may be a possible source of funds for ADA upgrades near senior housing and destinations.

- Using federal funding for sidewalks can require considerable administrative overhead. Another possibility is to trade federal dollars granted through the NMTTP or the FTA 5310 with local dollars generated through the SMART sales tax.
- Shared public/private funding for enhancements associated with new developments and building permit requests
- Safe Routes to Transit funding from MTC
- Transportation for Livable Communities funding from MTC
- Shared funding from related projects (such as station area planning projects associated with the SMART commuter stations)

Strategy 4: Expansion of Subsidized Taxicab Pilot Program

Transportation Needs Addressed

Taxicabs are a widespread form of alternative transportation that seniors can use when they do not drive. Taxis are available on short notice, in areas with limited bus service, and at times when bus service is infrequent or there is no bus service. However, taxi service is expensive, especially for people with limited incomes. In addition, many older people are not comfortable taking taxis because of concerns about service quality, safety, and driver behavior. Very few taxi companies operate vehicles that are accessible to people in wheelchairs.

Project Objectives and Description

Agencies in Marin County have started filling the needs for both accessible cabs and for reduced fares for seniors and people with disabilities. There are a total of six accessible cabs in Marin; four are owned by Marin Transit and are leased to On the Move, the parent company of several local taxi companies, and the other cabs are owned by North Bay Cooperative Taxi Company. A trip in an accessible cab can be arranged through North Bay Cooperative Taxi, Belaire Cab, Radio Cab, and Marin Yellow Cab. Rates are the same as with any taxi ride.

Under a demonstration project, a pilot taxi voucher program was established in Marin County to test the appropriateness of the taxi voucher alternative as a cost-effective means of meeting the needs of seniors. The pilot, in operation from December 2009 through June 2010, focuses on seniors 65 and over in two communities in central Marin. Participants must attest to the fact that they have limited their driving, are considering not driving, or are not driving now; paratransit-eligible seniors are included in the program. The program offers a 50% subsidy on the purchase of coupons. Taxi rides are limited to Marin. The program was marketed through direct mail to target households, publicity through the local newspaper, and flyers distributed to senior residential facilities. Whistlestop is handling the applications and booklet distribution. The proposed strategy will build on the existing pilot, possibly considering different geographic locations and subsidy levels.

While the current program is based on geographic area, another approach might be to distribute vouchers through medical facilities so that people could use them to get rides home from appointments.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Marin Office of Mobility Management: Marketing, printing and distribution of coupons, rider screening, program administration.

Taxicab Companies and Drivers: Consultation in program design; service delivery.

Implementation Steps

- Evaluate the pilot demonstration to determine how this type of program might be administered in the future.
- Identify one or more cities interested in building on existing pilot program.
- Conduct detailed planning, operation, and evaluation of the expanded pilot.
- Implement the more developed taxi program throughout Marin County.

Funding

- FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Funds
- Local funding sources to be identified

Strategy 5: Community-Based Volunteer Driver Programs

Transportation Needs Addressed

Seniors who do not drive have transportation needs that may not be met by conventional transit services, including ADA paratransit like Whistlestop Wheels. Some seniors who do not drive are not eligible for ADA paratransit and live in areas with limited bus and rail service, or need to travel when transit service is infrequent. Others are frail or need personalized assistance that is difficult to provide on Whistlestop Wheels, or need transportation arranged on short notice.

Implementation of the volunteer driver program currently being undertaken by Marin Transit will provide a more customized transportation option for these seniors.

Project Description

The volunteer driver program will be managed by the Marin Mobility Manager office. While initial steps have already been taken to implement the program, some variations could incorporate elements of the following two models. In one model, Marin Transit (or a contractor) would screen

seniors for eligibility and would provide oversight, coordination with other participating CBOs and public transit providers, technical assistance, mileage reimbursement for drivers, and possible umbrella liability coverage. The agency could also act as an applicant for foundation, private-sector, or community support. Such a project could begin with one or two communities, with the intention of expanding throughout the County if it proves successful. In this model the main source of rides would be volunteers recruited by seniors themselves (friends, neighbors, family) with assistance from community organizations. Drivers could also be recruited directly by participating community organizations or a coordinating organization. Typically in these programs, volunteers use their own vehicles; this can result in there being few if any accessible vehicles available to the program.

In another model, the agency would use purchased vehicles (which may be wheelchair accessible) and volunteer or paid drivers who can provide a reliable, self-sustaining service in which seniors who can afford to will pay the full cost of transportation. In this model, rides could also be provided at reduced prices based on sponsorship by business, drivers who operate vehicles in exchange for future ride credits, and vehicle donations in exchange for future ride credits.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Coordinating Organization: The office of the Marin Mobility Manager will be the central coordination agency and could offer technical assistance.

Local community organizations: Likely partners include non-profit senior centers, ethnically-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and service organizations. They would conduct community outreach, make initial contact with seniors needing rides, help seniors recruit volunteers, and possibly recruit and coordinate volunteers themselves.

Cities: Likely partners include city-based community and senior centers.

Transportation Authority of Marin: TAM administers the “School Pool” program, which coordinates carpools for school children. This program is being expanded to include commuters, and could also be expanded to include matching senior riders and drivers.

Implementation Steps

This strategy is undergoing implementation by the Mobility Manager’s Office and has already secured \$70,000 in New Freedom Funds for the first year (starting late 2010). Once funding is received, a non-profit agency will be contracted to administer the program. Administration will include screening and training drivers, who will use their own cars for transporting seniors. Reservations might be handled by the paratransit dispatching center.

Additional Funding

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s Lifeline program funds transportation projects aimed at filling gaps for low-income communities; funded programs may be targeted to low-income seniors. This may be a source of funding for communities deemed low-income.

Another possible funding source is the Area Agency on Aging, which has funded a similar program in Sonoma County.

Strategy 6: Encouraging Use of Transit

Transportation Needs Addressed

Many older people have little recent experience using public transportation, particularly in a suburban area like Marin. Having driven for decades, they may be unaware of transit services or have inaccurate perceptions based on experiences from long ago or images from the media. As a result, they may not use transit when they begin to have difficulty driving, even though they are still physically and mentally fully capable of doing so. Failure to take advantage of available transit services can make older people more dependent than necessary on family members and may contribute to premature reliance on paratransit service.

Some aspects of this are related to Strategy 9, Information and Assistance.

Project Description

Promotions and community efforts will be developed to communicate to older people that transit in Marin County is safe and comfortable, uses modern equipment, provides convenient service to many places, includes features such as kneeling buses to make transit “senior friendly,” and can help them maintain personal independence beyond their driving years.

Marin Transit started a pilot “Transit Ambassador” program in 2007, where volunteers who are knowledgeable about transit service in Marin personally train others, particularly seniors, on how to use the bus system. This program became dormant over time, but since late 2009, Marin Transit’s Mobility Manager has begun to recruit volunteers, and has publicized the program through transit presentations at senior housing complexes close to transit. The presentations cover older driver safety, transit, and paratransit. Once Ambassadors are recruited, they would attend these meetings and follow up personally with those expressing interest in learning how to take the bus.

Beyond the Ambassador program, some examples of potential efforts include:

- Organize group bus trips on public transit. These could be organized by senior centers, housing complexes, or “senior transit ambassadors” on special trip or regularly scheduled service.
- Market to older people using advertising in free newspapers, columns in these papers by seniors, tables at shopping locations patronized by seniors.
- Conduct focus groups with seniors about desired features of transit service and how to market transit service to older people.
- Create a video about older people using transit, possibly through a contest for high school or community college students, with sponsorship by public access television and local businesses. Show it on cable television, distribute it to senior centers and housing complexes, and provide it to senior transit ambassadors to use at events.

- Create city-focused map-schedules, with sponsorship by local businesses, showing local destinations of interest to older riders.
- “Try Transit” promotions targeted to seniors with participation by businesses.
- Post enlarged route maps at senior centers, focusing on the routes serving that location.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Marin Transit: Marin Transit’s Marketing Department would play a lead role in most efforts.

Cities: Cities may be involved in promotions targeted to local service, such as city-focused map-schedules, and organizing trips from senior centers or community centers.

Others: Partners in various efforts may include senior centers and senior housing, Cable Channel 26 TV, service organizations, local businesses, and healthcare providers.

Implementation Steps

- Identify a lead coordinating agency
- Prioritize and establish timelines for programs to implement
- Partner with other agencies as appropriate for in-kind or funding assistance
- Develop marketing plans for participatory programs

Funding

- Health care organizations such as Kaiser Permanente and Sutter Hospital may be interested in sponsorship opportunities.
- Within the existing Marin Transit marketing budget, a portion may be available for efforts targeted to older people.

Strategy 7: Safe Driving

Transportation Needs Addressed

Driving is the preferred means of transportation for most older people. Many older people can drive safely even after physical limitations make it difficult or impossible for them to use public transportation. As a result, when they do have to limit or stop driving, they are dependent on family members, ADA paratransit, and other community services. Helping older people continue to drive safely will help them maintain independence and mobility, and reduce dependence on public services, including ADA paratransit. Helping them drive safely and recognizing when it is time to limit or stop driving will also reduce the rate of accidents involving older people. Widespread misconceptions about older drivers result in older people failing to get needed help and advice.

Project Description

A variety of organizations provide driving safety programs. Local volunteers would provide the AARP Driver Safety course; the California Highway Patrol is testing a new driving safety program; and the AAA of Northern California is training people for the CarFit program to help older people adjust their cars for safety.

The American Society on Aging and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) created the “DriveWell” program, which is a more holistic approach for seniors. Topics include nutrition, physical health, and modifications to the senior’s car that can keep them driving longer, as well as information on how to talk to older adults when it’s time to give up the keys. NHTSA also trains people to train others at a minimal cost.

Additional initiatives might include:

- Expanding the availability of older driver safety programs by recruiting and training older people as instructors, developing additional course locations, expanding the availability of training in languages other than English, and expanding availability of self-assessment aids such as the AAA’s Roadwise Review.
- Developing additional resources to help people obtain confidential, expert assessments of their driving ability, at a reasonable price, and how they can make needed modifications for safer driving.
- Making information about driver safety programs available through numerous channels such as resource booklets distributed at senior centers, libraries, housing complexes, medical offices, and pharmacies; the Network of Care and Marin Transit web sites; and local public television. Informational materials will identify the strengths of the various driver safety programs.
- Identifying resources to help people make recommended modifications to their cars.
- Creating maps of easy-to-drive routes to common destinations with, for example, fewer lane changes and left-hand turns.
- Increasing public information to enhance general understanding of older drivers, their abilities, and needs.
- Including demonstrations of Marin Transit bus service as part of driving safety events.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Training Providers: AARP and California Highway Patrol volunteers; AAA. Events are hosted by senior centers, community centers, and other organizations.

Community Awareness and Driving Fitness: Research local health providers such as Sutter and Kaiser for driver wellness programs; senior centers for availability of the AAA Roadwise Review.

Information Dissemination: Marin County Division of Aging and Adult Services; Marin Transit; Family Services Agency and other community organizations; ethnically-based organizations; senior and community centers; medical offices and pharmacies; Channel 26 Cable TV.

CA Department of Motor Vehicles: The DMV could publicize online and local programs through mailings or other media targeted to older drivers.

Implementation Steps

- Identify programs most applicable to Marin seniors
- Publicize thorough existing means such as the aforementioned Marin Transportation Guidebook, senior service directories, any other relevant County of Marin or agency-sponsored web sites, or any ongoing meetings focused on seniors

Funding

Funding needs are expected to be minimal. The cost of materials and refreshments for some events may be paid for by local medical centers, senior centers, or DOAAS.

Strategy 8: Information and Assistance

Transportation Needs Addressed

Older people and those they turn to for information are not always aware of the full range of available transportation options, including Marin Transit bus service, Whistlestop Wheels, community transit services, rides that can be arranged through community-based organizations, and driver safety training, including modifications to cars to make them safer for older drivers. Existing sources of information serve their primary purposes, but do not address all the transportation needs of older people. Resources for non-English speakers are limited.

Project Objectives and Description

Information about transportation resources for older people needs to be easily available, current, and accurate, so that older people can plan for a time when they have to limit or cease driving, and so that people who suddenly find themselves needing alternative transportation can find out what is available. A lead agency will gather, disseminate and update information about all forms of transportation available to older people and make it available through multiple channels, including a countywide telephone information number; a comprehensive guidebook on senior transportation services in Marin (similar to those in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties); brochures and flyers distributed through senior centers, community centers, libraries, community agencies, and healthcare providers; a web site; and periodic seminars for staff of agencies that serve seniors. Information will be made available in forms that can reach people who do not speak English.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Lead Agency: The Marin Transit/Office of the Mobility Manager may be the most appropriate agency to lead this effort and be the clearinghouse for all transportation information.

Information Gathering: Although a lead agency would gather information, Marin Transit, cities, and community organizations that provide services would have significant responsibility for providing accurate information to the lead agency.

Countywide Telephone Information: This function could be provided by a County-sponsored senior information line, Family Service Agency, 211, or some other community-based organization.

Web Site: A web site about senior transportation could be located within websites of Marin Transit, 211, Network of Care (seniors services website sponsored by the Marin County Division of Aging and Adult Services), 511.org, or a County of Marin website, Marin.org. Funding permitted, another approach is to create a Marin Seniors web site that covers all aspects of senior living in Marin, including housing, transportation, health, leisure activities, and social opportunities.

Literature Distribution: Cities would distribute brochures at community centers, senior centers, libraries, and possibly healthcare providers, and pharmacies. Community agencies would distribute information at their sites. As appropriate, literature in languages other than English would be distributed.

In-person Communication: Organizations that work with seniors, including ethnically-based organizations that work with non-English speakers, would designate staff who can stay current about transportation options and provide this information to their clients.

Implementation Steps

- Research Information & Assistance programs to identify an organizational framework, service plan and potential funding sources appropriate to Marin County
- Identify lead and partner agencies funding needs and resources
- Execute partnership agreements and hire or designate staffing
- Review, update, and organize information, starting with existing resources
- Establish and advertise telephone information and a web site; print brochures
- Host periodic training sessions

Funding

- There would be additional cost for printing, telephone, and web site administration. These would be minimized if performed by an office that already performs similar functions.

Strategy 9: Walking Groups for Seniors

Transportation Needs Addressed

Walking can be the most convenient form of transportation once older drivers lose licenses. Even if they live in walkable areas, older adults may not feel safe walking alone, and this contributes to isolation from community. Walking is one of the easiest and least costly pastimes, providing significant benefits for physical health, mental health, and social engagement.

Project Objectives and Description

This project would create walking groups for seniors by encouraging walking and by providing a means by which seniors could find others in their neighborhoods to walk with. Groups could be organized through senior housing, senior centers, existing senior social clubs, and neighborhood associations. If there were a senior-oriented web site as described above, it could refer seniors to some of these other sites to find walking partners. Besides the direct benefits of walking, the groups can also be used to help identify locations in the community where barriers to walkability exist, such as cracked sidewalks, short traffic signal crossing times, or lack of curb cuts and benches.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Information Gathering: Although a lead agency would gather information, Marin Transit, cities, and community organizations that sponsor groups would have responsibility for providing accurate information to the lead agency.

Web Site: There are many web sites focused on both seniors and on recreational activities in Marin, including www.walkbikemarin.org/, a web site focused on bicycle and pedestrian activities in Marin County. WalkBikeMarin, a project of Marin County, would be a good site for information and referrals to senior walking groups (as well as other walking groups)

Literature Distribution: Cities would distribute brochures at community centers, senior centers, libraries, and possibly healthcare providers, and pharmacies. Community agencies would distribute information at their sites. As appropriate, literature in languages other than English would be distributed.

Implementation Steps

- Contact Marin County DPW about adding a Walking page to their WalkBikeMarin site, with a section focused on senior walkers
- Contact senior-focused organizations in Marin and ask them for any information on walking groups
- Present information on walking and its benefits at senior centers and social clubs

Funding

- This effort would require minimal funding and may be accomplished through existing sites and through volunteer efforts.

Strategy 10: Planning Policies for Senior Housing

Transportation Needs Addressed

The topography and land use decisions in Marin County cause many people to live in hilly residential areas that are not served by transit, or are too far or hilly to walk to commercial areas.

Many residents “age in place” and lack sufficient transportation options. Seniors who live in these areas often feel isolated and are frustrated by the constraints on their mobility.

In addition to the dissatisfaction of residents, public transit cannot serve these areas efficiently and usually doesn’t serve them at all. County and local planning documents explicitly state that senior housing is well-suited for infill development and should be targeted for more densely populated downtown areas; despite this, developers continue to submit plans for senior housing on remote hillsides. Placing senior housing in downtowns and on major transit corridors will enable senior residents to walk and take transit, remaining connected to their community and getting healthful exercise while remaining independent.

Project Objectives and Description

The goal of this project would be to research and coordinate land use planning policies in Marin so that municipalities are united in requiring that senior housing and other senior-oriented facilities be planned for walkable areas on main corridors close to transit and services seniors need. By creating consistent county-wide policies in the placement of new senior housing, Marin County could ensure that senior housing is placed close to transit, shopping, civic uses, and recreation. Policies should support senior-friendly housing in downtowns. Plans for senior housing and other senior-focused facilities should be required to include a transportation element, showing how residents and staff will reach the location without having to drive. The transportation element should show how the location of the site relates to existing transit routes, and the site should accommodate buses, including bus and van turnaround locations if necessary. The Transportation element of the development plan should be reviewed by Marin Transit to insure that it accommodates transit.

Potential Roles and Partnerships

Lead Agency: The Marin County Commission on Aging wrote a white paper entitled “Recommendations for Affordable Housing in the County of Marin and its Cities and Towns” which the Board of Supervisors adopted on March 16, 2010. Therefore, it may be an effective lead entity with understanding of the interplay between these elements and a stake in the outcome.

Marin County Community Development Agency: The CDA could contribute to this effort by offering informational workshops to planners in all jurisdictions that focused on planning for seniors. They may also play a role in modifying codes to restrict senior housing to areas connected by existing walkable streets near services and transit.

Marin Community Foundation: In 2009, the MCF initiated a \$10 million affordable housing plan for low-income families and seniors. As part of this initiative, they researched the housing laws in all jurisdictions of Marin. This might form the foundation of research into how communities vary in policies regarding senior housing.

Implementation Steps

- Research and document county and community policies on the location of senior housing developments

- Propose changes, additions or new policies to incentivize decisions that place senior facilities at locations with transit access and within walkable distance to services such as pharmacies, medical facilities, groceries, and libraries
- Develop an outreach strategy to reach decision-makers; this may include a “summit” or similar meeting to educate decision-makers on the ramifications of siting of senior housing and centers
- Draft sample policy language

Funding

- If the Commission on Aging adopted this strategy, the funding needed for staff support to supplement the volunteer work of the Commissioners may be moderate.

Tier II Strategies

The following strategies are less likely to be implemented in the short term because they did not rank as high as the Tier I strategies outlined above; often, the high capital expense or lack of an identified funding source was a factor.

Transit	Countywide general public demand-response service (Dial-a-Ride similar to Novato's service)
Transit	Inter-county transfers to Petaluma and San Francisco from West Marin
Transit	Medical service to and from Kaiser/Sutter
Transit	More amenities at bus stops
Policy	Make parking lots safer
Policy	Require private health providers to transport clients
Demand-Response	Casual carpooling at senior facilities, and senior ride-sharing

Countywide general public demand-response service (Dial-a-Ride in the County in addition to Novato)

The recently-initiated Novato Dial-a-Ride service has been successful. This service is for anyone within Novato (not just seniors), and runs during morning and evening peak hours. Fares are \$2 each way, or \$1 for seniors. Residents of other communities would like to have the same kind of service. Marin Transit might be able to assist communities in designing and funding similar service within their boundaries.

Inter-county transfers to Petaluma and San Francisco

In West Marin and north West Marin, the closest shopping area is Petaluma. Currently there is one “Shopping Shuttle” that takes people from Tomales to Petaluma once a week. Residents of this area would like to have more transportation options to get to Petaluma without have to

triangulate through San Rafael on public transit. While it would be operationally possible for Marin Transit to provide transit from Point Reyes and/or Tomales to Petaluma, the service is funded with Marin County sales tax revenue, so there is some political difficulty in using these funds to transport shoppers out of the County.

Medical service to Kaiser/Sutter

During outreach for this project, and noted in the recent West Marin Needs Assessment Study (Marin Transit, 2009), residents of all areas of Marin expressed a need to get to Kaiser Medical Center in Terra Linda, or Sutter in Novato (Kaiser San Rafael is already served by the West Marin Stage). This is consistent with a request from Nicasio for service, since it lies directly between Point Reyes and Novato. However, this option would require new service from Point Reyes. Residents indicated that any service, even two days a week, would be helpful. This strategy may be eligible for rural transportation funding.

More amenities at bus stops and on main streets

The lack of amenities at bus stops poses a real barrier to seniors otherwise willing and able to use transit. Waiting for extended periods at a stop with no bench or shelter is physically challenging, as is walking more than ¼ mile to shopping, services, and transit. The lack of a resting place between home and walkable destinations such as grocery stores, the post office, or a pharmacy, was cited by project participants as a primary reason they did not walk to these locations. Amenities that would assist seniors who walk and those who use transit include benches, trash cans, lighting, and shelters at stops. Bus stops are sometimes paid for through contracts with advertisers, while street “furniture” would be the responsibility of the city in which it is placed.

Make parking lots safer

In suburban areas such as Marin, shopping centers are often surrounded by very large parking lots, with no clear path to get from the street (where transit may run) to the front door of the buildings. This creates conflicts between pedestrians and cars backing out of spaces, or cruising the lot looking for a space. There are two measures that could be taken to help with this issue: first, establish design criteria at the county level for placing buildings at the street, rather than as an island in parking, thus helping all pedestrians, not just seniors. Secondly, Marin Transit might review its routes to see where buses might travel next to the buildings rather than at the perimeter of the shopping area.

Expand previous efforts to require private health providers to transport clients or share costs

Private for-profit health clinics, particularly dialysis clinics, rely on their patients being transported using public transit or social service-sponsored transit. Patients who undergo dialysis are in a particularly fragile condition after treatment; if they are using paratransit or public transit, the ride back home can be unnecessarily lengthy. This strategy, which has already been attempted in the past by Whistlestop, would require private for-profit medical facilities to either provide transportation for those patients who would normally use paratransit; or to contribute financially to paratransit and public transit systems. Further research should be conducted to identify systems where cost-sharing has been achieved, and explore their applicability in Marin County.

Casual carpooling at senior facilities, and senior ride-sharing

Some seniors living in senior housing continue to drive, especially during the day. This strategy would encourage and formalize ride-sharing at senior housing complexes and senior centers. Within one facility or housing development, ride requests/offers could be posted on a bulletin board or sign-up sheet in a central location. Extending beyond centers, it may be possible to set up ride-sharing for seniors within the neighborhood through an internet-based ride-sharing site, particularly in the West Marin region. This might be a feature of the volunteer driver program, since it is assumed that members of that service would have undergone a background check to verify that they have a valid license, insurance, seatbelts, etc.

Initial Steps for Implementation

This section suggests initial steps for implementing the Tier I strategies, using a timeline from Summer of 2010 through the Spring of 2011; these dates are flexible – implementation of most of these strategies would not proceed until this plan is presented to Marin Transit Board of Directors and the Transportation Authority of Marin Board.

The ten Tier I strategies outlined in this report vary considerably in required level of collaboration, funding, and time to implement. For many, the first step will be to identify an agency that can initiate and oversee the strategy. Identifying funding will also be required for many, although there are some that may not be very costly and could be implemented through existing programs and agencies.

As a result of the project which produced this plan, the Marin Transit Office of Mobility Management is proposing that the Advisory Panel or some subset of it continue as the Marin Mobility Consortium. The role of this group would be to meet regularly and continue to advise and partner on moving forward with the actions proposed in this plan. The group is expected to meet in April of 2010, and would play a key role in moving forward with the implementation steps outlined below. An initial step for this group would likely be to prioritize the proposed transportation measures, and then identify lead agencies, partner agencies, and funding, if necessary.

Timeline for First Year Implementation Steps

Tier I Strategy	2010 Q3	2010 Q4	2011 Q1	2011 Q2
Transit-based Strategies				
1. Community Bus for Seniors Local fixed-route shuttles to serve short trips within communities.	Identify possible funding sources; apply for grants.	Inventory existing shuttles Identify underserved routes connecting seniors and destinations of interest		Once funding is secured, design pilot services in a limited area
2. Flexible Transit Services Fixed-route services, deviate on request	Identify senior origins and destinations near but not on existing routes Analyze schedule for "slack time" to allow for flexing route	Pilot route most likely to be used. Market flex services to residents and destinations near proposed flex route, in conjunction with transit training		Continue with pilot, evaluating impacts on schedules which may require adjustments. If extra service hours required, seek funds from served origins/destinations.
Walkable Communities				
3. Walkable Communities for Seniors Prioritize pedestrian improvements in neighborhoods with high concentrations of seniors & walkable destinations. Utilize ADA transition plans as foundational project lists.	Establish coordinating agency. Meet with County ADA coordinator and corresponding staff in cities to explain approach. Seek supportive funds for analysis of transition plans.		Develop task list, timeline, and partnerships. Inventory transition plans and determine status.	With partner agencies, develop and get consensus on senior-oriented criteria for prioritizing projects. (Next: Inventory project sites, prioritize work using new criteria).

Tier I Strategy	2010 Q3	2010 Q4	2011 Q1	2011 Q2
Demand-Response Service				
4. Subsidized Taxicabs Build on current subsidized taxi pilot program.	Evaluate pilot, adjust pricing, geographic area, and other factors as necessary.	Locate on-going funding for County-wide service.		
5. Community-Based Volunteer Driver Program Continue efforts to establish non-profit, community transportation network with public and private funding.	(New Freedom Funds have been approved; project can start when funds are received). Establish model for program. Identify scope of work for contractor and reservations agent.	Release an RFP for non-profits to administer program. Select contractor. Develop and initiate program. Recruit volunteers Market service to public (Ongoing) Evaluate program, recruit volunteers, market service to public		
Information				
6. Encouraging Use of Transit "Try Transit" brochure and promotions, video, organized trips, tailored service descriptions.	Identify a lead agency. Examine more closely options for programs, including cost and potential partners. Prioritize projects.	(Next steps would depend on which projects were selected for implementation.)		
7. Safe Driving Make Marin older drivers more aware of driver training, driving retirement, adapting cars for older drivers.	Identify lead agency. Identify partners in Marin to hold informational sessions. Identify most promising programs.	Publicize programs through existing related websites, organizations, senior fairs, etc. Ongoing publicity		
8. Information & Assistance Mobility Manager: multi-modal telephone information, web site, literature distribution including Senior Transit Guidebook, seminars for agency staff working with older people.	Determine an organizational framework, service plan and potential funding sources Identify components which would not need funding. Prioritize program components.	(Next steps would depend on which programs were selected for implementation.)		

Tier I Strategy	2010 Q3	2010 Q4	2011 Q1	2011 Q2
9. Walking Groups for Seniors Coordinated groups organized around senior center or culturally based organizations; accessibility audits of path-of-travel	Decide on format for the program: centralized, many individual programs, etc. Network among county agencies to leverage existing transportation-oriented web sites.		(Ongoing) Present information on walking and its benefits at senior centers and social clubs. Develop/deliver training on accessibility audits .	
Planning Policies				
10. Planning Policies for Senior Housing Planning reviews for senior housing and other senior-related facilities should require close-in locations and a transportation element.	Identify lead agency. Identify volunteer or paid staff to conduct research.	Research / document Marin policies on location of senior housing developments.	Propose changes, additions or new policies to incentivize placement of senior facilities in walkable locations.	

