



To:

Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District
Marin Transit
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Petaluma Transit
Santa Rosa CityBus
Sonoma County Transit
Sonoma County Transportation Authority
Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit
Transportation Authority of Marin

Date:

11 September 2025

Support & Refinements for MASCOTS Plan

Dear Planners and Board Members,

Thank you for your efforts and collaboration to study, share, and implement the Marin-Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service Plan (MASCOTS). The interagency coordination and operator-neutral approach promise to deliver service rationalization and improvements that will grow ridership, providing a path to future revenue and service increases.

We believe that these five refinements should be made to the MASCOTS pilot, to best serve riders and to ensure its success:

1. Options should be considered to preserve late-night service in Sonoma County.

The extension of nighttime SMART service under MASCOTS will not fully replace current late-night Golden Gate Transit 101 service in Sonoma County. Northbound, the last SMART train is proposed to leave San Rafael at around 10pm, much earlier than the current last 101 bus, which leaves at 12:25am. The [MASCOTS website](#) notes that, for passengers going north after this last SMART train departs, "There are no public transportation options. Passengers would need to use a ride-share service or a private taxi service." Although late-night ridership is low, preserving late-night service is essential for Sonoma County residents who work late shifts, are returning from entertainment in SF or the East Bay, or experience unexpected delays, and a rideshare, costing \$50 or more, would not be an accessible replacement. Before implementing the

pilot, planners should consider adding two runs of late night “owl” bus service to major & highway-accessible SMART stations to preserve this safety net.

2. SMART headways should be improved to 30-minute clockface increments.

The success of the MASCOTS plan relies on regular, timely transfers between SMART and regional and local buses, especially at the San Rafael Transit Center. SMART currently operates at 32-, 64-, and 96-minute frequencies, rather than the clockface 30-, 60-, and 90-minute frequencies originally planned. Under SMART’s current schedule, transfers to Golden Gate Transit and local buses, which do run on a clockface, will be irregular, with some runs requiring long waits. With the near-term implementation of the MASCOTS pilot, SMART schedule changes should be made to run regular service in clockface, 30-minute increments, without sacrificing service to any community or station. Planning should also be started for medium- & long-term rolling stock and infrastructure improvements that will improve the reliability and frequency of service through the current single-track sections of SMART.

3. A bus bridge should be pre-coordinated for use during SMART service interruptions.

The MASCOTS plan’s improvement to SMART service span and frequency, consolidating north-south service in Sonoma County, will allow all transfers to take place at SMART stations, improving their consistency and legibility and simplifying local routes. However, this change may reduce the availability of buses to implement replacement service during [unplanned SMART interruptions](#). Standard bus bridges should be planned for this foreseeable event, and all necessary aid agreements between SMART and bus agencies should be put in place in time for the implementation of the MASCOTS pilot.

4. Local service changes should be shared as soon as possible, and should provide regular timed transfers to regional services.

Riders need a complete service schedule to understand the MASCOTS plan’s impact on their future door-to-door travel time. This is particularly important for Marin Transit service south of San Rafael, where the plan needs effective transfers between local and San Francisco service to replace the 150 bus. Before implementation, all service changes should be thoroughly communicated including via outreach to community groups, on board buses and at stops, accessibly, and in multiple languages. Planning constraints from the MASCOTS process, such as high stop penalties for SF-bound buses to serve local hubs and bus pads, should be identified and carried forward to planning for medium-term capital projects to address them, such as bus-on-shoulder infrastructure or new transfer facilities.

5. Paratransit coverage must be preserved.

Changes to regional and local transit stop locations can affect the [area where paratransit service is required](#). Paratransit access has a very high impact for those who rely on it. Planners should share whether route changes will have an impact on paratransit coverage areas, and have agency boards confirm that paratransit service will be maintained as-is.

Thank you,

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