

Public Comments Received as of September 13th 2021

#1 From: Bob Stephens
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

I was shocked to hear that you have turned your back on one of the most popular and necessary local agencies in Marin...Vivalon...and given the transportation services to an outside company. Vivalon is an essential part of our community and has always been very fair with it's programs. Please change your vote and keep them helping our local residents who need so much help. This is too important to ignore. The community is watching you

#2 From: Janet Kerby
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

Marin Transit Board meeting 9/13, Agenda item #5 It is highly disturbing to learn of the possible removal of our local non-profit Vivalon to be replaced by a for profit international organization. This will have a profoundly negative impact on countless local individual providers of essential services and the countless more who receive these excellent services through Vivalon. It is difficult to understand the possible motivation for such a change, at a time when local organizations need the continued support of the local community, particularly after this difficult past eighteen months. It would be a travesty to make such a change, and I strongly urge the board to focus on what is best for our needy citizens and maintain the contract with Vivalon.

#3 From: Walt Buster
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

It is with great concern that I understand you are changing the paratransit contract from Vivalon to a foreign firm after 50 years of loyal and dedicated service to the needy citizens of Marin. This is especially concerning as the chosen firm is more expensive than Vivalon. Please reconsider this egregious action.

As a former superintendent of schools in Marin and current Vivalon board member, I am very concerned about the Transit Boards decision to choose a foreign transportation service at an increased cost over Vivalon and it's 50 years of outstanding service. I recently met with Miller Creek and San Rafael City Schools about planning to use Vivalon buses for special education children. Vivalon is committed to serving Marin seniors and kids. The contract should go to them! Thanks

#4 From: Alison Kreshin
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

This is my experience with Vivalon (Whistlestop wheels). My elderly father, Lawrence Kreshin, moved from Virginia to Larkspur to live with my family when he turned 80 ten years ago. He was suffering from progressive spinal stenosis which made walking more and more difficult. He also had a slowly progressive dementia. Whistlestop vans picked him up regularly to take him to groups at Whistlestop, to classes at Dominican, and to doctors' appointments for years. All the drivers came to the door to help him get into the van. He was so slow but not one driver was rude to him. They fastened him in with seat belts. They talked to him like a friend. They were the most regular contact outside our family that he had. My father would have been 90 years old today. He died 2 years ago. Multiple employees from Whistlestop/Vivalon came to his memorial service and they told stories about my father! They knew him and loved him. I doubt anyone from this new outfit would do the same. I am shocked that you have decided to go with a large for profit multinational company over a local nonprofit. You may contact me if you wish.

#5 From: William Levison
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

Please continue working with Vivalon for transportation for seniors in Marin. Do not give contract to an outside contractor. Thanks wjl

#6 From: Michael Christopher Vogel
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

Although I was not crazy about the name change to Vivalon, the thought of having a foreign for profit corporation come into the area to operate a service that has worked so well for so many years to our Marin residents makes me very upset. It makes no sense & I very emphatically protest. I will always love Whistlestop in any name configuration they have!

#7 From: Anonymous
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

Whistlestop has done an excellent job in providing para transit service. I can't imagine why the contract would be given to a for-profit company.

#8 From: Kenneth Gosliner
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

It has come to my attention that Marin Access has chosen to discontinue their relationship and not renew their contract with Vivalon for the Paratransit Service and Program. This is a horrible decision. Why after Vivalon (Whistlestop) has provided this service faithfully and flawlessly for over 50 years would they make that decision. Not only are they choosing a foreign company but a for profit company that submitted a higher bid. Something is very wrong here. I have supported Whistle stop for many years and have only heard rave reviews especially during the last 18 months when all agencies suffered through the worst pandemic in over 100 years. I beg you to reject this recommendation and stick with a known entity that has been efficient and trustworthy of your needs for over 50 years. I am not a newcomer to this community I have served on 8 Marin County Non Profit Boards over the last 30+ Years. Our residents deserve the best and Vivalon offers that solution. PLEASE REJECT THE RECCOMENDATION AND AWARD THE CONTRACT TO VIVALON !!!

#9 From: Richard Kalish
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

Vivalon has served the community effectively for many years. Unless there is a compelling reason to make a change, no change should be made. I'm 74 years old and anticipate using their services. I prefer using a provider that is proven and that I know and have good reason to trust. Please don't replace them.

#10 From: Anonymous
Date: 9/9/2021
Comment:

Vivalon has been operating Whistlestop Wheels paratransit transportation services for residents of Marin exceedingly well for over 50 years and should continue to do so.

#11 From: Amanda Ebey
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I support Vivalon as the transit provider. Please stay with Vivalon and Whistlestop.

#12 From: Ed Lehrman
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

This is unconscionable awarding a contract to a foreign for-profit company when their bid was higher than Whistle Stop. Please, please think about what is going on here.

#13 From: Tom Marx
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Unless there are extenuating circumstances that I am not aware of, we strongly believe that it is in the best interests for a Marin County based NPO to be awarded a contract over an international for profit.

#14 From: Vicky Tuorto
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I, for one, hope that this new company gets the contract. While Whistlestop drivers show care for their passengers; they show no sensitivity for the other seniors and disabled living on the property where they pick up. Several of us residents requested Whistlestop to park at the bus stop which was costly and was created by Marin Transit. Instead, Whistlestop continues to come into the small parking lots; several times knocking over our entry signs, and they park close to other's apartments with ghastly loud motors running and CO2 being emitted. They claim they must listen to what the passenger requests. If only they would take a moment to think and see that the passengers they pick up here are completely mobile. The real reason they drive into the parking lot is because they want the passengers to hear that they have arrived without having to get off the bus and go to their door. However, if the drivers would read the manual, it says that the passengers should be "waiting" for the bus at the arrival time. Instead, they come in as far as possible, then use their backup beeps to alert the passengers that they are on site. And those who are living near the parking lot suffer through this ritual two or more times each day. Everyone in a senior community has health issues, not only those who take the bus. I hope we tenants can reason with the next company.

#15 From: Helen Walters
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

My husband and I, registered voters in Marin, have been longtime supporters of Whistlestop, now Vivalon, because we feel that their mission is essential for our aging community, adding some humanity to the services they provide. As a primary care physician at Marin Community Clinics, I regularly hear patients commenting about the Paratransit services. We also hear how important familiar services are from other residents, such as our friend whose 96 year old, wheelchair-bound mother counts on Whistlestop to go to her medical appointments. We love our community, we value the services provided by the non profit Vivalon, and we have concerns that their contract would transition to a large, impersonal, for-profit, international corporation. This seems counter-productive to the services they provide. We hope you will reconsider Whistlestop's removal.

#16 From: Charles Tumminia
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

For a company that has served the community for over 50 years, that's quite a record. They must be doing something right ! Please renew Vivalons contract and keep Their employees. Don't give this contract to a foreign company . Stay Local. FOR OVER 50 Vivalon (Whistlestop) has been serving Marin's para transit travel needs. The contract is up in January. Marin Transit has decided to award the new contract to a foreign owned for profit company. This is in spite of the fact that ours was the lowest bid and we benefit many needy persons with jobs and support. Last year was as you all know the most difficult period for device providers in over 100 years. In spite of that Vivalon increased services and provided the most rides ever.

#17 From: Caine Starelli, starinairfax
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am writing this note of protest, to let you know that I do not agree with your outlandish decision to abandon our own local, well established and trusted non-profit organization: VIVALON! At this time, American leaders, are doing their best to bring health and prosperity to American - you are abandoning that premise, and hiring a for-profit company from FRANCE? As a person on the outside, looking-in: To me this is a highly suspicious-looking decision, on the part of the Marin Transit Board. Should an investigation to "Follow the Money", get started? I want to know.

#18 From: Hoby Wedler
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board of Directors:

I am a blind Ph.D. chemist and entrepreneur.

As a Sonoma County resident, I use Marin Access regularly to attend meetings in Marin, San Francisco, and the East Bay. I have been using Vivalon's Marin Access service for many years now and I have come to know all of my drivers by name and vice versa. The drivers employed by Vivalon are incredibly professional, hard-working, and take safety as their #1 priority. They are cheerful and timely and always get me where I need to go on time and safely. Perhaps most importantly, they are incredible at explaining my surroundings to me when I disembark their buses in unfamiliar areas and always make a point to ensure that I get where I'm going.

Vivalon has been providing paratransit services for over fifty years now and I've found these services to be nothing short of stellar. I am frankly baffled by why Marin Transit has chosen to work with Transdev, a private France-based company. I understand that the bid provided by Vivalon was lower than that of Transdev and I've done research to find that Vivalon has a better safety record than Transdev. I implore you to re-consider this grave mistake made by Marin Transit. I find this decision to lack any sense of supporting our community and frankly am appalled by your lack of respect your decision shows for our community.

I do not understand the decision to select a company that appears to have a poorer safety record, will cost more, and will replace a local, trusted, well-loved nonprofit. I find the decision disheartening and disrespectful to our community.

I'm sure there are other factors that weighed into your decision that I am not aware of, but from all the facts that I have I'm confident you are making the wrong decision. I am prominent in my community and will ensure that the community knows my feelings should you choose to move forward with Transdev. If you care about the community you serve, you should re-consider this decision.

#19 From: Lana Severn
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Please keep our transit local. Everyone likes what we have. Why go big corporation, non USA?? Keep it local.

#20 From: Adam Pollor
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Please make the right choice for our community.

#21 From: Karreen Brandit
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I cannot understand why Marin Transit would choose a NON-local company that charges more for their services and has a considerably worse record over a proven local agency??! LOCAL is the way to go with an organization that has proved over the years that it cares about it's clients, KNOWS their clients, and can provide well for those clients. Local is VIVALON!! Please reconsider your choice and this time- stick with VIVALON! Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

#22 From: Tim Biddle
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am baffled by Marin Transit's decision to bring in a large, national for-profit organization AT A HIGHER PRICE to replace a local, established nonprofit that has been providing excellent, reliable, and caring service for over 50 years.

#23 From: Arlene Hansen
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I was shocked, appalled & in disbelief when I read that you awarded the Marin Access Services to not some other "local" groups - but to an out of the country, for profit group!!! I'm still angry, even tho I read this many hours ago. It is superior judgement to award a local, non-profit that has local interest, is responsive immediately due to proximity! Vivalon has proven track record! They have local, friendly, reliable drivers.... well liked by the clients. Were you all impressed by the foreign group because it is "bigger"? Well, in all my 85+ years, I've NOT been impressed that bigger is better!! Local, personal service wins my vote! WHY o WHY did you choose some group from not just out of Marin County, but out of the USA??? It does not make one iota of sense to me. We are all urged to shop local & I also donate local (with few exceptions) I feel that you have made a hurtful, wrong decision in awarding this contract out of the country! Please, reconsider & change that contract!

#24 From: Tom Bonomi
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Based on Vivalon's 50-year record of providing exceptional service to Marin Transit and its patrons, I ask Marin Transit to reconsider its recommendation to award the paratransit services contract to Transdev. Vivalon is a trusted, local and cost-effective partner. The risks associated with initiating service with a new provider appear greater than the potential benefit.

#25 From: Patricia Tobin
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

This is completely unjustified--- what POSSIBLE reason could you have to terminate Vivalon services

#26 From: Steve Glanz
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Do NOT switch to Transdev. NO on Transdev. Vivalon has been a strong, reliable partner to Marin Transit for over 50 years. They are known for on-time performance and excellent customer service, with 24-hour support and swift resolution of customer issues. Their ADA compliance is impeccable, with not one denial or issue reported, and their safety record is well above the national average. In fact, it is six times better than Transdev according to MTC archives. The numerous letters of support received from riders and community leaders in Marin County when they submitted their recent proposal speak to the caring, safe and

reliable transportation that is integral to Vivalon's mission. Their drivers know their riders by name and vice-versa. These relationships are vital in the paratransit community for feelings of support and stability at all times, but especially during the uncertain times caused by the pandemic. Please renew their contract to continue providing safe, reliable and trusted paratransit services to our community.

#27 From: Stephen Swire
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I was shocked and disappointed to learn of Marin Transit's decision to end its 50 year relationship with Vivalon in favor of a multi-national for profit corporation. Vivalon has served the local community for decades with a device that is not only of impeccable quality, but also carried out by individuals who are caring of the the community they serve. And they are known by and know their riders by name. I hope this decision can and will be overturned. Thank you.

#28 From: Judy Loring
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am confused and disappointed by Marin Transit's decision to bring in a large, national for-profit organization to replace a local, established nonprofit that has been providing excellent, reliable, and caring service for over 50 years.

#29 From: Mitchell S Golbus
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Board Members Looking at the evaluations for this contract, two items jump out. The first is qualifications and experience, and it seems unreasonable that you would grade the organization with a long history of providing these services so low in this category. Vivalon's long experience as Whistlestop appears to have been discarded. The second is innovation and value added where the value added of having a local provider seems to have been ignored. And then you accept the contract with a much larger cost! This appears to be one more example of a public service board ignoring cost as it is not their money they are spending. I strongly urge you to reconsider the recommendation on the table. Thank You

#30 From: Tichy Linda
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am writing in support of keeping Vivalon as the para-transit program instead of changing to the For Profit Transdev Company. Why would you ever consider changing from a local, non-profit organization which has long standing relationships in the community. This program has been run by Vivalon for over 50 years and quite well. Their management is exceptional and has done well by this program. Why would Marin County ever think of changing management companies. Please reconsider your decision and keep Vivalon as the managing portion of the para-transit program.

#31 From: William Tichy
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Why try to fix something that isn't broken? Vivalon (formerly Whistlestop) has had a half-century plus history of success serving needy Marin County residents with transportation and other services and transferring from a non-profit structure to an \$8.7 Billion international transportation giant seems ill advised. Bill Tichy

#32 From: Thomas Guldman
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am writing to protest the Marin Transit Board's proposal to award the Marin Paratransit contract to TransDev, instead of Vivalon. Vivalon has an outstanding record in providing this service to Marin County for many decades, submitted the lowest bid and is recognized throughout the County for its dedication to the community. I am utterly incredulous that you are proposing to replace Vivalon with a foreign corporation that submitted an interior proposal and has a far from distinguished record of service elsewhere. I very strongly urge you to reconsider this travesty of open contracting and to continue to use the demonstrated excellence of Vivalon in providing Marin's paratransit services.

#33 From: Barbara Otto
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am writing to protest Marin Transit's decision not to renew Whistlestop's contract providing paratransit services to the Marin community and instead award it to Transdev. Whistlestop(now known as Vivalon) has been providing safe, caring and reliable service to the community for over 50 years. Whistlestop is a local non-profit organization and has a safety record six times better than Transdev's which is a private for profit company based in France. Whistlestop offers the lowest cost, is ADA compliant and 24 hour customer support. I strongly urge that you renew Whistlestop's contract. Why change something that has worked so well for so many years in our community!

#34 From: William D. Wilson
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

As a former contracting officer for the federal government, I see a hazard here that is seldom accounted for when contractors are replaced. Despite staff evaluation that is impartial, objective, and fair, there is always unanticipated turmoil when the new contractor begins. It is my understanding from the staff report that Vivalon's proposal was actually the lower cost proposal. Why, then, risk such issues? And why replace a local non-profit with a multi-national for-profit. Has Vivalon's work in the past been inadequate? I suggest that this contract award be studied further.

#35 From: Robin Marci
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am baffled by your decision not to award the paratransit contract to Vivalon.. Before the pandemic I had ridden with them for more than 5 years and have always found the drivers and staff helpful, kind and knowledgeable. Please reconsider your decision.

#36 From: Anne McCadden
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board, I am writing to voice my support for Vivalon which I feel has provided excellent, reliable, and caring service to our aging community in Marin. Please don't replace them with a for-profit organization which lacks close ties to our community. My neighbor Pauline, who's about to turn 113, raves about the meals and customer service she has received from Vivalon. Please retain Vivalon as a bedrock of our community!

#37 From: Kay Karchevski
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I urge you to retain Vivalon who are LOCAL and a NON-PROFIT.

#38 From: Allan Bortel, invernness
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

For some 50 years Marin County's seniors and citizens living with disabilities have been served with paratransit by Vivalon (formerly Whistlestop) in an arrangement with a county transit agency, Marin Transit (MT). The familiar "Whistlestop Wheels" busses are a doctor-approved demand service costing riders only a few dollars.

The recommended (by staff of MT) contract award to Transdev flies in the face of supporting our local, long-time contractor Vivalon, an established and well-loved nonprofit organization. It is like another “big box” store coming into Marin.

The Marin Transit Board (our five county supervisors and two city/town representatives) has a 111-page staff report before them for their 9:30 am Board meeting on Monday, September 13. It recommends the French controlled private, for profit, Transdev. The 111 page document was distributed online less than a week before the 9/13 meeting. How does this give the public any time to read and understand what the Board is being recommended to approve on a long-term contract? This is not the way Marin County usually works.

To the best of my knowledge, no one from the Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC) was informed that there was a need to improve current paratransit services by changing providers. Only a brief reference is made in the letter to the MT Board that support was “...including riders and community partners or other stakeholders, provided input that helped to shape the final RFP...” It should be required that citizens of Marin should be given the opportunity to understand the construction of scoring and its reliability. According to Vivalon, they received over 40 letters of support from riders and community partners when they submitted their proposal.

I’ve been on Marin’s PCC for the last 15 years and the paratransit and related services we discuss have never been a hot issue for us. We see reports on complaints as well as compliments at our sessions. No big problems or criticisms emerge. In the senior and disabled community, in my conversations with paratransit riders, I never hear about problems with the service, minor or major.

In those same 15 years, we have never discussed the issues in the current staff report at a PCC meeting regarding a Vivalon deficit in technology and innovation, a basis for the proposed change. Isn’t this is the appropriate forum to discuss such a major change for Marin’s paratransit riders, community partners and stakeholders. In many other selection processes in the county, various interested non-professionals are included. Apparently, MT staff did not include those parties in this process.

It’s curious that the negotiations with the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD) and its contracted local services do not involve an RFP or community participation. MT’s comparisons show that GGBHTD is far and away the most expensive service purchased by Marin taxpayers at over \$300/hour, amounting to 80% of our transit budget. Paratransit is in the \$90/hour range, amounting to 20% of our transit budget. While and I know that cost is not the only factor in selection, it’s cause for speculation that MT chose to handle the renewal of these two contracts so differently.

The total lack of public involvement and short notice recommending a change of paratransit operators is shocking when compared with other Marin County contracts.

It baffles me that the MT Board would consider a change during the pandemic, that would require seniors and disabled persons, already stressed by Covid restrictions, to adapt to a new operator for what has been a steady, reliable service. I do not understand nor support this decision to fix something that isn’t broken.

#39 From: Sue Beittel
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am very disappointed that Marin Transit has not continued its long time contract with Vivalon (formerly Whistlestop Wheels) to provide paratransit services. I have attended many transportation meetings over the years, often sitting in for the League of Women Voters Transportation Committee. I have been very impressed with both the organization and the employees. In fact I have been so impressed that I have recently donated my 2004 Honda Civic Hybrid to Vivalon.

I have decided that at age 94 it was time for me to give up driving and turn to Vivalon for some of my transportation needs. I strongly urge you to reconsider your decision not to continue paratransit services with Vivalon, the tried and true provider of excellent transportation services. I hope you will provide the Marin Independent Journal an explanation of your contract renewal. Letters to the editor will flow in favor of Vivalon.

#40 From: Joanne Webster
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I just learned of the intention of Marin Transit to award the para transit contract to an outside vendor after 50 years of successful service from Whistlestop, now Vivalon. I am frankly shocked and disappointed that they would not choose a local company. This is not the message that we should be sending to the community as we start to recover from the pandemic. Everything I know about Vivalon, it's services, it's people and it's commitment to our most vulnerable is nothing but stellar. I ask that you pause on this decision and explain why Marin Transit is not supporting a local company.

#41 From: Beth Reizman
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am contacting you because I am very concerned that the Marin Transit Paratransit contract is being awarded to an international company, Transdev, with their North America division headquartered in Illinois. Transdev's proposed contract will cost a minimum of \$1,000,000 more annually than the contract proposed by Vivalon Whistlestop Wheels. Whistlestop started paratransit in Marin County 67 years ago. They are a trusted, local non-profit whose safety and service record is far superior to that of Transdev. In addition, I am sure you are aware of the manner that Vivalon stepped up and became a leader among the non-profits to provide services to the community during the Pandemic. They continue to do so. The same type of service and caring is provided to the paratransit customers every day. I believe there is some misinformation that has been provided regarding Transdev's capabilities compared to Vivalon. I urge you to carefully read the letter of protest filed by Vivalon.

#42 From: Ingrid Seifert-Clausert
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board, I am elderly and am a supporter of Vivalon and the services it provides. I support having them continue their transit services in the County, rather than having a new provider in their place. Thank you.

#43 From: Elizabeth Bernstein
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I ask that the Marin Transit Board reconsider its recommendation to award the operation of Marin Access Services and Programs to Transdev Services, and instead award that contract to longtime local non-profit service provider Vivalon, operating as Whistlestop Wheels.

Whistlestop came to my father's rescue at a critical time in his life.

My father, Philip Bernstein, lived by himself for 40 years in a condo in Fairfax that he loved. He drove until he was 90. When the DMV took away his license, he was crushed. He thought it would mean the end of his independence – the end of doing the things he loved and seeing the people and places he enjoyed.

We were all worried about the impact losing his license would have on his quality of life. To everyone's surprise, very little changed. He called Whistlestop Wheels and everything continued as it had before. He took himself to his many doctor appointments, went to his friends' houses, even continued to play poker twice a week. My father's mobility was too frail for public transit and all those taxis would have been too much of an expense. Whistlestop drivers picked him up, took him where he needed to go, and brought him home.

My father was hard of hearing and sometimes he didn't hear the phone ring or the doorbell when his ride had arrived. Because the drivers knew him and felt a personal responsibility to get him where he needed to go, Whistlestop worked with us to resolve these barriers. They never treated him like a number. He was always a valued, real part of the community that Whistlestop had committed to serve.

Being able to take care of himself allowed my father to maintain his identity and his sense of self as he aged. There was nothing more important to him than staying in his home for as long as he could and living his life on his own terms. Because of Whistlestop, he was able to do that until the very end.

I hope the Marin Transit Board will reconsider its decision to sever ties with Whistlestop. Whistlestop was part of the village that took care of my father. They are committed, as a local nonprofit, to helping keep their community strong. I do not think a large, multi-national, for-profit private company would care about or serve our senior residents with the same investment and care. Their missions are simply and factually not the same.

Whistlestop gave my father his freedom in the last several years of his life, and for that I will always be grateful. I hope they have the opportunity to continue to do the same for others.

#44 From: Sherri Jacobs
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

I am understanding that Marin Transit has accepted Transdev as the new provider for paratransit services, I have to say I am shocked that the county is looking to a company that is not only within the county, but from a different country, that operates in 17 other countries. REALLY!! Marin County is all about supporting our community and to make these changes without even consulting the community you serve is very dicey. I know that you are looking towards new inventive technology, but your community that you are serving are older people and they are not technology updated and they will have great trouble. You will lose them, you will also be part of their isolation due to they will have problems with changes. Our older community will be excluded in this move if you go forward with it, which is a great deal of your ridership. Are you really doing them a service by making these changes?

Please let's not move forward too quickly and think about the relationship that you have had with Whistlestop / Vivalon. Let's talk about the jobs that will be lost with this non-profit that has given you faithful service for so many years. You are really not doing Marin any favors and I believe that if you make these changes you will regret them and you will have spent many dollars that will be going into the deep pockets of another country.

I urge you to please slow down and think about your decision very carefully.

Thank you

#45 From: Jon Schmidt
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Transit Board,

Our disabled son is a frequent rider and user of Vivalon. Over the years we have come to appreciate what it offers, and how well it does its job. Our son feels comfortable with the service, and has become friends with many of the Vivalon employees.

We feel strongly that this service is mandatory to support those disabled or less fortunate in Marin. And we also feel strongly that the service should be provided by a local company, with roots in Marin. We are afraid that a large national company will offer a soul-less, non-personal approach to what should be a warm, helping hand for our neighbors and family. We all know the frustration of dealing with a call center or dispatch center who has no clue about who is calling, what their special circumstances are, and what the local conditions may be.

Please reconsider your decision. Efficiency is nowhere as important as community.

#46 From: Dellie Woodring
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board of Directors:

I am shocked and dismayed to learn of your decision to award the Marin paratransit contract to an "out of area" organization. Vivalon (Whistlestop) has been doing an outstanding job filling this space for the last 50 years. Their safety record is excellent and how fortunate we are to have such a vital non-profit organization in place to help the increasing number of seniors in Marin. I cannot even begin to understand why you would award the paratransit contract to an international for profit company.

As a volunteer with our Marin senior community (I was one of the original founders of Marin Villages) I understand the important issues with our constituents. First and foremost is the issue of consistency and familiarity with service providers, for there must be a feeling of trust and a sense of security for the user. Many riders are on a first name basis with the drivers of Whistlestop Wheels.

I feel you are making a huge mistake by not awarding the paratransit contract to a local organization and to one that has been doing such a good job since the 1970's.

#47 From: Susan Sharpe
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to strongly protest your decision to award Marin County's paratransit contract to Transdev. Vivalon - formerly Whistlestop - has provided this service to Marin County residents for more than 50 years without ANY ISSUES! Why in the world would you give this important service to a for-profit company from France??

Marin residents have come to rely upon and trust Vivalon as their paratransit provider. They have longstanding relationships with the drivers, and know that Whistlestop has been serving their community for many decades.

Don't throw this hard-earned and well-deserved trust away with such a foolish decision. I implore you to KEEP Vivalon as your paratransit partner!

#48 From: Bill Hurley
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

To whom it may concern:

It was brought to my attention the Marin Transit might switch the Paratransit from Vivalon to another company. This is a huge mistake..

Vivalon provides so many excellent services to the people of Marin County, but the most important is the paratransit they provide to the elderly and wheel chair bound people. My brother has used the service, as he is in need for transportation to get from his work place and beyond. The customer service level of the Vivalon with Marin Transit has been a God send to him and my family. The drivers are courteous, on time, and work well with the people who need this service. First Class operation!!

Please reconsider moving the contract to another company. Work with Vivalon to ensure that they continue the services in our community, as they are part of our community and continue the excellent service they provide.

#49 From: Carrie Harris
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

To the Board:
Regarding Agenda item #5, September 13 meeting

I URGE you to continue using the long established LOCAL transport services provided by Whistlestop/Vivalon. They provide excellent PERSONAL, CARING service for transporting our "precious cargo." For years I have watched the familiar buses up and down my little street, caring for several neighborhood elders. What an insane idea to award this contract to a foreign group who has no heart connection to our community! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? And how dare you take jobs away from the gracious workers who provide this service? I am a longtime supporter of Whistlestop/Vivalon and I am stunned that officers of my home county for 45+ years would undermine a highly successful established local operation that is the most financially reasonable option. This makes no sense. If it ain't broke, leave it alone. PLEASE.

Very sincerely, with outrage

#50 From: Suzanne Cable
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit:

I've just learned that you DID NOT select Whistlestop/ Vivalon to provide ongoing paratransit services to Marin County... I'm dumbfounded. From what I gather, our local non-profit even BEAT THE BID of the foreign, for-profit organization whose bid you chose! This is very worrisome.

Whistlestop/ Vivalon is a LOCAL NON-profit with a 50-year track record of successfully serving Marin's seniors and disabled populations. Their service has been exemplary and reliable. I

cared for my mother, a woman with Alzheimer's Disease, in my home for 15 years. I'd have lost my mind had it not been for Whistlestop.

PLEASE RECONSIDER THIS DECISION.

#51 From: Susan L. Miller
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

To the Marin Transit Board of Directors:

I am completely baffled by Marin Transit's decision to bring in a large, national for-profit organization, Transdev, to replace a local, established nonprofit, Vivalon/Whistlestop, which has been providing excellent, reliable, and caring service for over 50 years. Please reconsider this very unfair decision. Now, more than ever, we need people who have earned the trust of citizens of Marin County for their transportation needs.

#52 From: Ruth K Nash
Date: 9/10/2021
Comment:

Marin Transit Board of Directors Meeting, Sept. 13, 2021, Agenda Item #5:

Award of Contract for Operation of Marin Access Services Program
Recommended Action: Award to Transdev Services, Inc.

We are suspicious of and concerned about the directors' information and subsequent motives for not awarding (again) Vivalon's contract to continue providing paratransit transportation services in Marin. As Marin residents for over 50 years, we are very aware of the role Vivalon (formerly known as Whistlestop) has played in Marin County for decades. We have supported financially many of their activities for years.

(1) Why are you favoring the Transdev bid, a bid that we understand is a higher cost than that of Vivalon?

(2) Why are you favoring a foreign, for-profit organization with a track record that does not appear to come close to the excellent, reliable and caring service provided locally by Vivalon for over 50 years?

If you have evidence to counter our suspicions raised by the above questions, please provide specifics at this meeting. Give opportunity for Vivalon (and others) to dispute discrepancies between their findings and yours.

If there are inconsistencies with which you were previously unaware, please be open to withholding today's vote to award this contract until clarity and understanding are reached for a decision that all parties involved can agree is fair and equitable.

#53 From: Charlie Goodman
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have been involved with Whistlestop in Marin County for many many years.

I am shocked to learn that after successfully operating Marin Access Paratransit by Whistlestop (aka, Whistlestop Wheels Paratransit Service) for over 50 years, Marin County Transit has made plans to replace Vivalon, the low-cost local provider, with a France based private company named Transdev. Although Transdev has procured contracts with other cities and towns in the Greater Bay Area, I do not see that as a reason to switch from Vivalon to Transdev, especially when Vivalon ranks 6 times better than Transdev in local surveys.

Vivalon is reliable, has an 'on time' performance record, excellent customer service & safety records, and is ADA compliant. Everyone I know who uses them is very happy with the services they provide.

I oppose the Marin Transit plans to award Transdev the contract which is currently held by Vivalon as Whistlestop Wheels for paratransit services in Marin County.

#54 From: David Brown
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

Hello Marin Transit -

When dealing with seniors in Marin, I am very happy to recommend Marin Transit. I recently sent Mr. and Mrs. Kang your way from Shelter Bay, and they have rides now to the YMCA. Their quality of life has improved tremendously. I know the drivers and support from MT is wonderful and people like Mr. and Mrs. Kang rely on the local community based drivers from Vivalon. I did a little research into their claim -

Vivalon is a local nonprofit and has been a strong, reliable partner to Marin Transit for over 50 years. We pride ourselves on our on-time performance and excellent customer service, with 24-hour support and swift resolution of customer issues. Our ADA compliance is impeccable, with not one denial or issue reported, and our safety record is well above the national average. In fact, it is six times better than Transdev according to MTC archives.

...and I find it is true. I would urge you not to move to a large corporate organization with a multi-country footprint. This is like Amazon taking over the the fishing supply business and the local fishing supply shop on 3rd street going out of business. I took my small children their to get their first rod, talk to the pros who ran the shop, pick the best bait and tackle. Today it is vacant.

Our community deserves smart decisions, stay with Vivalon....please.

#55 From: Stan Moore
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

Board members:

The staff recommendation to award the contract to Transdev Services, Inc. is not in the best interest of the elderly and handicapped people who use the services provided. Moreover, the additional \$5 million or more that would be paid to Transdev over the life of the contract would be a waste of taxpayer funds.

I recently became Vice-President of the Board at Vivalon and have served on the Boards of other local non-profits. When making important decisions, I have always given highest priority to the best interests of the clients rather than to the institution. That is the standard this Board

should use in making its decision. The additional important consideration in this case is the significantly higher cost of the proposed Transdev contract. This Board should carefully examine the nature and extent of any benefit gained from spending additional millions of dollars. I have reviewed the staff's slide presentation (which was made available to Vivalon only four hours before its protest needed to be filed). The basis for the staff's recommendation to contract with Transdev rather than Vivalon is contained on only a single page with a table of points awarded. There is no explanation for the point differentials. The following page makes no attempt to compare strengths or value-added aspects.

The cost comparison between the two proposals received only 20% of the points awarded. That seems under-weighted. Cost is a very important factor, as your staff has emphasized to Vivalon. And it's important from a taxpayer perspective.

There is a 6.25 point differential in "Qualifications and Experience". Yet there is no explanation for the basis of that differential. It seems unreasonable given the decades of experience Vivalon has in providing high-quality, reliable and safe services.

There is a 7 point differential in "Approach and Work Plan". There is no explanation of what that even is or how the proposals were rated for this. Also, the weighting for this very subjective factor is 160% of the weighting given to the relative costs. That seems unreasonable.

There is a 5 point differential in "Innovation/Value Added". Again, there is no explanation of how the proposals were evaluated in this regard.

I understand that the Board needs to rely on its staff for the evaluation of the proposals. However, the Board deserves a much better explanation of the staff's choice. There is an insufficient explanation of the staff's recommendation to spend many additional millions of dollars to replace services being well provided by Vivalon. Board members have a right and a duty to fully understand the basis for such an important choice and to ensure the lack of any bias in the process.

#56 From: Mary Lou Ragghianti
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

Please do not vote to change the paratransport system. Vivalon's safety record is superior to Transdev and this is not mentioned anywhere in the board report. Vivalon is a trusted local community nonprofit organization and able to nimbly respond in times of crisis. There is no basis for a change and a pandemic is not the time to make this type of change when vulnerable people are already experiencing so much stress and uncertainty. Please do not approve the recommendation to select Transdev. What possible reason is there for selecting a significantly more expensive provider without any tangible reasons. (Vivalon is less expensive, has 50 years of experience in Marin County and is safer.)

#57 From: Joan Gosliner
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

I am very concerned that the contract has gone to a for profit large company instead of a local non profit. Vivalon's safety record is superior to Transdev and this is not mentioned anywhere in the board report.

Vivalon is a trusted local community nonprofit organization and able to nimbly respond in times of crisis.

There is no basis for a change and a pandemic is not the time to make this type of change when vulnerable people are already experiencing so much stress and uncertainty.

Ask them to not to approve the recommendation to select Transdev.
Ask them to help you understand why they would select a significantly more expensive provider without any tangible reasons. (Vivalon is less expensive, has 50 years of experience in Marin County and is safer.)
Thank you for your help!!!

#58 From: Patty Cerf
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

I have become aware that following a bid process Marin Transit plans to award the paratransit contract to the high bidder, Transdev, and not the low bidder, Vivalon. I do not understand why Marin Transit plans to award their paratransit contract to a bidder who was approximately \$500,000 higher than Vivalon, a non profit who has provided excellent service to the Marin community for over 50 years.

Relationships are a vital part of successful paratransit service. Vivalon and it's drivers know their customers by name and have received numerous letters of support from riders and Marin community leaders. Their record of customer service, on-time performance and safety is outstanding. Caring, safe and reliable transportation is integral to their mission to support independence, well being and quality of life for older adults and those with disabilities. This mission must continue to include their safe, reliable and trusted paratransit service.

Certainly, it would be beneficial for Marin Transit to use the additional cost associated with the high bidder to work with Vivalon, a known reliable partner, to achieve the goals outlined in the staff letter.

I urge you to reconsider and award your paratransit contract to Vivalon, the low bidder.

#59 From: Traci Dobronravova/Nancy Masters
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

To: Marin Transit Board
RE: Agenda Item #5 Award for Contract Operation of Marin Access Services and Programs

On behalf of Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS), a major provider of services to older adults and people with disabilities in Marin County, I am writing to express my concern regarding the selection of TransDev as the Marin Access Services and Programs provider. As an agency providing services in five Bay Area counties, JFCS has had the opportunity to work with a number of transit providers including both TransDev and Vivalon. Our support of Vivalon is based on our experience of working with these providers and feedback we receive from our clients.

Vivalon is more than just a transit provider - they are a well-respected and trusted partner in the community, providing a range of services to some of the most vulnerable individuals in Marin. They have a proven track record of providing safe and reliable rides to community members. Our clients who rely on Vivalon for transportation consistently report that they have had a positive experience. By embedding the transit program in an agency that provides a

broader range of services and is an integral part of the network of services in Marin County, our community members are better served.

We are disappointed that you would select TransDev, a national company, over a local agency with deep roots in Marin, a long history of excellent service, and an outstanding reputation. We hope that you will reconsider your selection.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

#60 From: Heidi Mayer
Date: 9/11/2021
Comment:

To whom it may concern:

Please keep your contract with Vivalon/Whistlestop. I have been a rider on Whistlestop for over 18 years.

I have used the service for medical appointments, going to work, seeing family via intercounty service and for volunteer work. The service is essential and drivers are friendly and helpful.

You have a long standing relationship with the clients, drivers and staff at Whistlestop. Do not begin a contract with a company unfamiliar with Whistlestop and located out of the state and area.

#61 From: Kathy Kimber
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I can't imagine how you could have come to the decision to replace Vivalon with a foreign, for profit company to run paratransit in Marin! This is a terrible decision. My husband worked with developmentally disabled adults for years and found Whistlestop Wheels critically important to many of his clients. Why would you replace a local nonprofit company with a foreign for profit one. It doesn't fit the philosophy or the needs of seniors and the disabled in Marin. Please reconsider this shortsighted decision. Thanks.

#62 From: Greg Giffra
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

As a 55 year resident of San Rafael I am very upset that Vivalon has not received the contract for transportation services in Marin. We need to support our Local Non-Profit agencies to foster goodwill in the community, and keep the existing transportation workers in their jobs. To outsource this service, to perhaps save a few bucks, seems very irresponsible to me.

Vivalon nee Whistlestop has done a great job of caring for our seniors. I have eaten several times in their Affordable restaurant, the Jackson Cafe.

Please reconsider and give Vivalon the contract!

#63 From: Kendra Erwin
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

We are very disappointed to hear that you plan to change providers away from Vivalon, when they have provided excellent service over 50 years. They are a non-profit organization v. the international French company that has no association with Marin County and its citizens. We strongly urge you to reconsider your decision. Christopher and Kendra Erwin Marin County residents

#64 From: Carmen O'Connor
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

We urge you to keep Vivalon as the operator of Para-transit services in Marin county. If we are to change vendors, we should support local-based companies. Vivalon is a nonprofit with an impeccable record for service and safety. Sincerely, Carmen and Brian O'Connor

#65 From: Joe O'Hehir
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Given the many comments and concerns raised by members of the Marin County community I respectfully request that the Marin Transit Board delay the decision on agenda item # 5 by one month until your October meeting to allow dialogue and discussion regarding this important decision. Specifically, Marin Transit staff should meet with the Marin Access PCC and other members of the public who will be impacted by this recommendation. In my opinion this is not simply a vendor switch. The Marin Transit staff is recommending a change in a 50-year operation and partnership that has been provided by a Marin County based trusted nonprofit community resource in which millions of dollars have been invested using Marin County tax dollars. In addition, I feel that the Marin Transit staff should identify and reveal the members of the evaluation panel who reviewed and scored the two submitted proposals. 75% of the evaluation criteria is subjective and open to interpretation. Transparency is key to building community trust for a recommendation such as this one that has potential impact on thousands of Marin County's most vulnerable residents. A 30-day delay will allow time for discussion and consideration for the public's concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

#66 From: Mathew Erwin
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

When looking at this paratransit contract objectively, what I see is that for a billion dollar for-profit transit company this \$15M contract over 5 years is inconsequential. But what I don't think is being realized is that there are unintended consequences when all of that public \$ leaves our county. If Vivalon/Whistlestop can improve their driver pay/benefits and tech systems with an influx of \$500k a year, I think you should give them that opportunity. Clearly from the public point of view, their service is stellar, trusted, consistent, and frankly beloved. As our public servants, you owe it to the community to delay making a hasty decision. Ask for community input. Delve into the details and see how we can avoid making a fiscally foolish choice. These are our tax dollars and we deserve a voice and for you to hear it.

Matthew Erwin

#67 From: Antoinette Golbus
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I am very distressed to learn that the Marin Transil Authority on which you sit is planning to award the paratransit contract to the group Transdev which is a non-USA for-profit company. Vivalon/Whistlestop has served our community well, with near perfect record for over 30 years and it is a local NGO. It is mystifying to me that it could even be considered to switch from a company with such experience in our community to a newcomer that is a for profit. Please vote no on this issue!!!!!! Antoinette Golbus, RN

#68 From: Dan Caven
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I have been a driver with Whistlestop/ Vivalon since 2007. I'm disappointed that the contract for paratransit has not been renewed. Many people are dedicated to the safety and efficiency of transportation for Marin residents who have relied on the service for decades. Continue the contract with a local agency that will grow and serve the community that has partnered together for many years. Sincerely, Dan Caven

#69 From:
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I am writing in support of awarding the paratransit contract to Transdev. I have been a driver for Vivalon going on my 6th year and am absolutely amazed how inept this company has been run the past year! Vivalon would love the donors and public to believe that they love their drivers but that is not the truth! Drivers have no one to support us! There is no one drivers can speak with that will actually take action with concerns. We are the lowest paid employees at Vivalon while handling the most responsibility! We are in charge of transporting our most vulnerable, fighting

traffic, on time performances, drop off performances and correcting our manifests daily as our schedulers, dispatchers and optimizers cannot seem to do this job properly! The entire office at Jordan Street is the epitome of incompetence! No one knows what the other is doing! It's a zoo! They keep hiring drivers and can't even give seasoned employees 8 hours. Mr Guy Egger was the last of supervisors who actually listened and had driver's backs! I am in support, as are other drivers, in giving the contract to Transdev. Obviously, a company that has over 85,000 employees knows how to run a company and being union means drivers have support! Vivalon office personnel are only interested in resuming their paychecks. Not the drivers or the community. Drivers are concerned with their paychecks but also the safe and caring transport of the community! Thank you for your time,
-Vivalon Drivers

#70 From: Craig Yates

Date: 9/12/2021

Comment:

This infection conducted by Marin Transit, why? This French organization unfortunately isn't workable for Marin's Paratransit services! Appreciate your influence and make move to stop this organization from lobbying take over Paratransit services! 🛑

#71 From: Kate Fitzsimmons

Date: 9/12/2021

Comment:

I am writing because I am very concerned about the Transit Board's pending decision to approve a contract for paratransit (on demand) services in Marin to a large, International French owned company, Transdev. This means ending a long-standing partnership with Vivalon, a local nonprofit based in Marin. My mother, who suffered from dementia, safely used Vivalon's paratransit services into her 90's. I am not quite sure why Transdev's experience with the Trapeze software is being touted as such an asset for the Paratransit (on demand) contract. In fact, they scored points for it in the application process. If the Trapeze website reflects Transdev's understanding of Marin's paratransit riders, they clearly are missing the point of the service and the riders' needs. If they did understand, why on earth would they choose this phrasing and I quote: "Paratransit - Travelers Experience - Retain vital passenger data, empower riders and reduce call center volume with easy to use tools your digital savvy passengers are anxious to get their hands on. Rev up the paratransit rider experience with an all new mobile app." A mobile app for seniors? These are seniors facing special challenges and many with disabilities. Lots of them are still using flip phones, or smartphones without bothering with the apps. No one to talk to in real time? Seriously? Software driven by AI? A mobile app for seniors and the disabled? Lots of them are still using flip phones, or smartphones without bothering with the apps. No one to talk to in real time? Seriously? Software driven by AI? That sounds like the software Transdev plans to use is really meant to distance the riders from human contact, with a focus on managers or bean counters seeking more data, at the expense of the riders. If Transdev places technology over service, they don't understand that paratransit is not for the digital savvy. It is for people who cannot use fixed route systems or navigate them on their own because of physical or cognitive disabilities. I am very concerned that a priority

placed on having software and IT experience is taking precedence over a dedication to people oriented customer service and a high regard for the value of the elders and others who rely on paratransit services. They don't need more mobile apps, they need human connection, caring and understanding. Those are intrinsic qualities paratransit riders find in the Vivalon drivers and schedulers they come into contact with at their most vulnerable. No amount of "innovation" "IT experience" or pursuit of the next shiny object can replace that. Haven't we learned anything during this pandemic? I am not against progress, but I question the wisdom of making a change for change's sake, rather than for the good of the riders you serve. I know you take transportation seriously and you promote the use of apps to facilitate better coordination of ride services, but there are a number of people who want a person to answer the phone or to at least get back to them. They can't or won't utilize apps efficiently. They are not tech/digital savvy. Don't they have a voice, too? I would like to understand why during a pandemic, when vulnerable people are already experiencing so much stress and uncertainty, that you would undertake this type of change. I am asking that you not approve the recommendation to select Transdev.

#72 From: Salamah Locks
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Board of Directors, I would like to give a verbal comment on Agenda item #5. Succinctly stated, I will be stating why the county services should continue with Vivalon Whistlestop Wheels. Supporting our county enterprises is consistent with the county values and commitment to the entrepreneurs and residents. I am a gerontologist and have personal/professional experience with both the San Francisco and Marin paratransit services and wish to present the differences.

#73 From: Eleanor Errante
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

To the Board of Directors: Ladies and Gentlemen: One has to wonder why on earth you would select a large, multi national, for profit transportation corporation to replace the highly regarded, local enterprise with a proven track record for ADA compliance and customer service with a 50 year impeccable history. This decision makes no sense...truly baffling! Many people in Marin are not aware of this decision but if they were they would undoubtedly express their displeasure with your reasoning. After 50 years many, many Marin families have nothing but laudatory comments and praise because of a personal history and most positive experiences related to Whistle Stop's long service to this county. Please, please carefully reconsider your unfortunate and unwise decision to contract with Transdev.

#74 From: Dennis Ryan
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board Members - My name is Dennis Ryan and I have lived in Marin County for 35 years, been a board member of Vivalon for 8 years and I just concluded my 7th and final

year as Board President of the Vivalon Board. Additionally, I was previously board president of The Buckelew Programs board and actively involved with LITA and Big Brothers / Big Sisters (three important nonprofit organizations serving Marin). I merely mention the above to inform you that, like all of you, I am community minded and want what is best for the citizens of Marin County and for those individuals using Marin County paratransit services. I believe if you consider the following, you will decide to not proceed with Transdev, but rather award the contract to Vivalon: Vivalon is an essential part of the fabric of the Marin County Community and has demonstrated for over 50 years high quality service and has tremendous support throughout the county. The quality of Vivalon's service is second to none and Vivalon has demonstrated years of consistent high performance, extraordinary integrity throughout its history (and this current review process), and provides a superior service at a lower cost to the county. I am baffled by the decision to move forward with an organization (Transdev) that is an unknown, an outsider and will charge more for the same services. I recognize you have limited time to review my comment letter and I merely ask you to step back and reconsider this very important decision. I believe by doing so, you will change your decision and proceed with Vivalon. Thanks very much and thank you for your service.

#75 From: Bob Rigler
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board Members: We were shocked and saddened to discover Marin Transit's decision to end the paratransit contract with Vivalon. As long time Marin County residents we can find no rationale which prefers a for-profit, foreign company over a highly respected local non-profit organization like Vivalon. Please review and reconsider the decision to move paratransit services from Vivalon. Marin County needs to continue supporting local service providers who deliver on-time performance and excellent customer service, with 24-hour support and swift resolution of customer issues. Vivalon should be allowed to continue providing safe, reliable and trusted paratransit services to our community. Respectfully, Bob and Bobbe Rigler

#76 From: Michael Howe
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

It is hard for me to fathom why another company, Transdev has been chosen as the provider for Marin Paratransit Services. I am a 51 year resident of Marin County and have been a consultant to and volunteer at Vivalon since 2014. During this time I have had the opportunity to work and/or observed virtually all of Vivalon's services. There has never been a doubt in my mind about the excellent quality of services provided by Vivalon. I would argue in favor of Vivalon regardless of the cost of services, as the staff, volunteers and clients are in need of the human and support services provided by Vivalon. My wife is 76, and I am 81, although we are not in need of Vivalon's paratransit services a neighbor who lives 2 house down our street depends on the paratranist services 5 days a week, come rain or shine. I have often stopped to say hello to both my neighbor and Vivalon's driver in the morning, the driver is always pleasant and helps take my neighbor from her front door to the van making sure she is not rushed and makes sure she is securely belted in before walking around the van to get into the driver's seat.

This kind of paratransit service is replicated 100's of times across the County every day. Why on earth would you consider moving this excellent community operated service that has served Marin seniors and disabled folks faithfully for 50 years to one that is not known and clearly does not have the local infrastructure to launch and run this for profit organization in Marin that does not have the support and confidence of the people who will be using these paratransit services? Finally, I see no benefit in creating a regional paratransit system that is not community based and locally controlled. There is plenty of evidence that regionalizing such services do not work for the very clients they are designed to serve. Reject approving item #5 Although I cannot be present for this meeting, I will be following up to make sure that MTC does the right thing!

#77 From: Patricia Bates
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I would like to express my confusion & disapproval of Marin Transit's board to approve taking the contract away from Vivalon/Whistlestop and give it to a for profit company, Transdev. Whistlestop has been working with seniors and ailing Marin County Residents for over 50 years. Vivalon is trusted and known by the entire County as a caring, experienced and knowledgeable ride service. It is not a right decision to take this company away and replace it with a company that has no idea about the senior community here in Marin County! I am asking you to please keep Vivalon/Whistlestop as the contracted busses & drivers to continue the companionate service that they provide!

#78 From: Raymond Burgarella
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Please do not change to a out of county for profit company. Vivalon (whistlestop) deserves after so many years of great service and winning the money bid to maintain the contract. You must realize or should realize the pushback and bad publicity that is going to come at you over this move if finalized.

#79 From: ***-***-0737
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I would like to see Whistlestop continue. We should support our local companies and they have been doing a good job for many years. I would hate to see an outside company to take over. Please reconsider!!!

#80 From: Ashley Baker
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

My comments relate to the experience of Vivalon employees currently serving the contract in a variety of positions.

On March 17th, Marin Transit hosted a pre-proposal meeting for prospective bidders to learn about the upcoming contract bid. Shortly after that meeting, TransDev ran public recruitment advertisements for key positions supporting their anticipated operations in Marin. A decision to advertise positions before the bid is submitted and the contract awarded raises two concerns. Did TransDev have such confidence they would be successful 6 months before the contract decision that they were ready to hire for Marin Operations? And, if TransDev has a more experienced team (as stated in the decision recommending TransDev over Vivalon) why were they advertising for open jobs nearly 6 months before the contract decision? Posting for key positions so early would indicate they may not have experienced people in place for this contract.

Additionally, TransDev received points for their preference to comply with CA Labor Code 1072 which states that the successful bidder will retain the employees of the prior contractor for a period of not less than 90 days. Does TransDev intend to hire and retain Vivalon employees for the contract long term? Or will these Vivalon employees find themselves unemployed after 90 days?

Vivalon employees find satisfaction in serving clients on the Marin Transit contract. They also find meaning in being part of Vivalon's larger mission serving the community in many different ways. Employees also depend on the paycheck. However, it's likely that some of these dedicated and experienced employees will make their own decisions not to accept job offers from a large for-profit international corporation. This will be a loss for the Paratransit clients and our community.

#81 From: Diane Duchesne
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Please reconsider your decision to cancel Whistlestop from providing paratransit services to the Marin elderly and disabled. They have done a great job for years and I understand their bid was lower than the agency you chose. The Marin community has trusted Whistlestop for years and years...please reconsider your choice.

Dianne Duchesne, RN
Fairfax resident

#82 From: Nancy Geisse
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

My name is Nancy Geisse. I am the Chief Operating Officer of Vivalon. I am also co-Executive Director and board member of Marin Aging and Disability Institute, vice-chair of the Aging Action Initiative Steering Committee and board member of the IHSS Public Authority of Marin. I am a member of over a half dozen other county-wide committees. So, I am speaking from a much broader perspective than as an employee of Vivalon. Three years ago, when I was exploring how to give back to the community where I have lived for 22 years, Tom Peters suggested

Vivalon. I was hesitant because I wanted to make a larger impact than I felt one nonprofit could achieve. After my first meeting with Vivalon, I knew my hesitancy was unfounded. Vivalon offers a large depth and breadth of programs and services that touch the lives of over 30,000 at-risk individuals in Marin County. In addition to our normal services, such as Meals on Wheels, Nourish, the Healthy Aging Center, Brown Bag Food Pantry, CarePool, and other specialized transportation, Vivalon can and has quickly turned on a dime to create new programs and services. For example, during the pandemic Vivalon launched 27 new programs and services to help address the new and growing needs of our at-risk community members. We launched two social connection programs and a check-in call service to make sure the needs of Marin's older adults were met. In all, we have made over 80,000 social and check-in connections during Covid. We have also delivered over 26,000 PPE, happiness packages, homemade masks and other supplies. We saw a need for culturally-appropriate meals in the Canal district, so we prepared almost 15,000 family-style meals and distributed them at the Canal Alliance food bank. In all, we have produced and/or distributed over 300,000 meals and provided over 80,000 rides during Covid. In addition, Vivalon was instrumental in launching several new county programs during the pandemic. We created the Vaccine Access Call Center fielding over 21,000 calls and scheduling over 3,000 vaccine appointments. We performed intake and delivery for the County Grocery Delivery Program and did the intake for the County Great Plates Program. In addition, we produce the to-go meals for the Congregate Meal sites. In total, Vivalon has provided well over a Half Million Services for Marin County's high-risk community members during the pandemic. Vivalon, known for its consistent, high-quality services and unmatched customer service, is a critical resource for Marin County and our most vulnerable citizens. I ask the board to please consider this when voting on the suggested change to the Marin Access service provider.

#83 From: Nancy Geisse
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

My name is George Beal. This is in support of keeping Vivalon with current management. I am disabled and have used Whistle Stop/Vivalon for two decades. The drivers and staff have always set very high standards of caring sympathy, consideration and competency, with a superior safety record. They have earned respect and affection from the entire community which I do not believe a for profit operation can equal. As the old adage says, If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Please stay with what is working so well.

#83 From: Charles Wexler
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Absolutely no reason to replace Vivalon. They do a great job, and are a local, nonprofit. What can you possibly be thinking? Do Not Make This Proposed Change.

#84 From: Sherry Berringer
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit, Please reconsider using another contractor instead of Whistlestop. Whistlestop has been around for a long time and our aging population in Marin County has learned to rely on them and trust them. What reason do you use for changing to new company. Please reconsider. Thank you.

#85 From: Karen Weinberger
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I was shocked to see Marin Transit abandon a local non-profit in favor of a multi-national, for-profit transit company. I read your scoring of the proposals and found them highly subjective. Whistlestop has provided outstanding service to Marin for decades. They are a wonderful employer. Mostly, they are an integral part of our community and there is a strong emotional bond between Whistlestop, their patrons and their employees. This decision cuts many of us to the heart. In retirement, my husband works as a bus attendant for Whistlestop. He is strongly connected to the community of attendants and drivers and to his clients who ride the bus. Whistlestop has enriched his life, given him new friends and a small retirement income. We are beyond devastated to hear of your plan to kill the contracts with Whistlestop. Sincerely, Karen Weinberger

#86 From: Edward DeRosis
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit, I'm writing to ask you to seriously reconsider awarding the bid to Whistlestop. I'm very concerned about this given that Whistlestop has had an exemplary record for the last 50 years, has served hundreds of elders (including those in my practice and a dear elder family friend), and is a local company that deserves to continue providing safe and reliable services — not an unknown outfit with zero track record here, and which I am led to understand put in a higher bid. I would appreciate your response to this. Sincerely, Edward DeRosis MD

#87 From: Barbara Judd
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

from the information i saw, replacing vivalon with a for-profit company with a less stellar record would either be an act of insanity or of insider trading or other payback. please put your riders first.

#88 From: Spencer Michels
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

As longtime Marin residents and volunteers at various non-profits (including Whistlestop), we are baffled by the staff recommendation that the contract to provide transportation for seniors and the needy be transferred from Whistlestop (Vivalon) to a new firm. Reading the explanation on page 101-2 of the board agenda is no help. We have been impressed by the services provided by the agency. So we can't figure out why it would be discarded after 50 years of apparently satisfactory service. The report says nothing negative about Whistlestop. Has the staff talked to seniors who have used the service? What was the consensus? Has the staff ridden the buses? If it is high tech skills the staff is after, was Whistlestop given the chance to develop or hire people with those qualifications? Why wasn't the local press informed of the pending change? The scoring measurements were confusing and difficult to interpret. Who developed them? How valid are the results? Basically, we think the board and the staff need to be more open and transparent. This is an item of interest to the entire community, and the board must take the time and effort to carefully analyze the negative effects, as well as the positive, of making such a dramatic change. Thank you for your attention. Spencer & Roberta Michels

#89 From: Susan Neil
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Please reconsider our local and excellent transport provider in Marin. We have been well served by them for years! No to a commercial for profit company! Whistle stop/Vivalon is Marin seniors choice!

#89 From: Richard Weinberger
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

As an employee of Whistlestop(Vivalon) since 2016. I am puzzled by the decision of Marin Transit to award a new award of operations from a recognized local non-profit, to a for profit international company. I am sure that the financial resources of this company far exceed what Vivalon can offer and I wonder if that motivates your decision. Whistlestop has served this community for 60 years and through its dedicated employees and volunteer supporters, has provided seniors, disabled people and mentally challenged people with not only valuable services, but a gateway to lives of independence, respect and decency. Richard Weinberger (bus attendant)

#90 From: Paul Ford
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I just learned that you have decided now to renew Whistlestop's contract with the county. Whistlestop is well loved & cherished transportation service...I wish I knew the reason for denying Whistlestop the contract. But if a new agency is selected can we be assured we wouldn't be denied continued ridership, that fares would remain reasonable & that other services would go down the tubes? I implore to board to reconsider their decision!!!

#91 From: Douglass Reilly
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board, This letter is to officially state my objection to the recommendation to the Marin Transit Board that Transdev replace Vivalon as the provider of Marin Access paratransit services and programs. In addition to providing the lowest prices for these services, I that Vivalon has, and will continue, to provide superior service to the community. Vivalon has been providing these services at a high degree of excellence for over 60+ years. As a result, it has facilities here in the county and has ongoing plans to upgrade its facilities and equipment. Vivalon's services come with significant letters of support from community leaders and its riders. Vivalon has been recognized as a Best Place to Work in the North Bay, six times and provides excellent support to its employees. Vivalon has an excellent safety record, one that far exceeds that of Transdev. Vivalon's drivers are known to the community members it serves, provide stable relationship in a time of terrible uncertainty due to COVID-19. The trust that Vivalon has established over the decades in the community is invaluable and cannot be replaced with a for-profit entity coming in from the outside. All the revenue generated by Vivalon, stays in the community for the benefit of those who live here not a far away corporate entity. I strongly encourage the Marin Transit Board reverse its decision and award the Marin Transit Paratransit contract to Vivalon.

#92 From: Vicki Gross
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear MTB Members- My name is Vicki Gross and I am writing in regard to Agenda Item #5, the recommendation to switch Marin's paratransit services from Vivalon (formally Whistlestop), to a French company Transdev. I was disappointed to learn that there was even consideration to award the contract to a non-local foreign company, and our family cannot conceive of any reason why it should be changed. My mother is an 85-years-old dialysis patient who is confined to a wheelchair, and she has been receiving rides from Vivalon three days a week for over a year now. Her husband is 88, and there is no way possible that he can do the transport, so Vivalon has literally been a lifesaver for her. We have nothing but the highest praise for the service they offer, especially the kind, wonderful, efficient and caring drivers. They are highly professional and meticulous in following all the safety procedures in getting my mother onto the bus, and then very carefully strapping her in, taking care not to bother her arm port where she has bandages from the day's dialysis treatment. She feels safe and enjoys getting to know all the drivers. We have been fortunate to get on a regular weekly schedule with Vivalon, which means I don't have to call in every week and request each individual ride. The drivers arrive very promptly in the morning to pick her up, and there is a 30-minute window in the afternoon for the return trip. They have never missed a scheduled ride, and on the extremely rare occasions where they are going to be late due to unavoidable traffic problems, they ALWAYS call and let her know. My family STRONGLY urges the MTB Board to renew Vivalon's contract. They are local and do an EXCELLENT job, and they highly deserve to keep doing their important work for

the citizens of Marin County. I appreciate your time to be heard on this matter. Thank you very much.

#93 From: Alissa Robinow
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I am dismayed to hear that you are considering not renewing the paratransit contract with Vivalon. This organization provides so much good for our community. To strip them of this portion of their service is unconscionable. Please reconsider your decision on this matter.

#94 From: Traci Thiercof
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I'm writing to humbly ask you to reconsider your decision and reinstate Whistestop/Vivalon. I don't understand why you would choose a for profit foreign company over a local non-profit with a proven track record. The service they provide is invaluable and they should be able to continue the incredible work they have been doing for the past 50 years. Please- reconsider!

#95 From: Lynette Carlton
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I want to add my voice to the many who depend on Whistlestop Wheels for paratransit services. Whistlestop Wheels has provided desperately needed service for so many who are unable to use regular public transportation. I have a friend who would otherwise be totally isolated if not for the WW service. I am unable to provide all of the transportation she needs to not be stuck at home 24/7. She has no other friends who can help her, and she depends on WW. This service has been invaluable to her, and to me. Please reconsider your decision, and renew Whistlestop Wheel's paratransit contract.

#96 From: Larry Meredith
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

For the last 20 years (14+ as Director, Marin Department of Health and Human Services; 5+years Marin Villages, Board of Directors) I have been very aware of the paratransit services provided by Whistlestop. These transportation services are invaluable to the 5,000 or so of Marin's most vulnerable residents who rely on them. I have heard only praise and gratitude for the drivers and the services. It is also my understanding that reviews by the Marin Transit staff have been uniformly positive and that no significant issues or problems have been identified. In

addition, Whistlestop has been providing these needed paratransit services within budget for over 50 years to the satisfaction of customers and the oversight authority. Consequently, it is difficult for me to comprehend how a fixed route, for profit, transportation provider with very limited history of providing paratransit services, never in Marin or a similar community could be judged to be superior to the Whistlestop paratransit services. Whistlestop is a national treasure located here in Marin. The contract bidding and rating process must be seriously flawed.. I respectfully request that the Marin Transit Board postpone any decision on agenda item # 5 for one month to allow adequate time for a review of the contract bidding, proposal evaluation and contract award process. Thank you for your consideration

#97 From: Jeff Wands
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

My name is Jeff Wands. I am the Chief Financial Officer of Vivalon.

If I had looked at the results of the Marin Transit RFP process and recognized that Vivalon had a worst safety and service record than Transdev and our costs were higher, I would have understood the decision to end our paratransit contract for Marin County after 50 years of exemplary service to our community. However, this is not the case. Vivalon's safety and service record is in fact superior to Transdev, and, based on the tiered pricing, when Marin County paratransit services return to pre-pandemic levels, based on Transdev's proposal their contract will cost the County almost \$1.5 million more than our proposal, which represents a 26% increase over Vivalon's proposal. Even at current ridership levels, the Transdev proposal is over \$1 million higher than Vivalon's. In other words, our County's paratransit riders could expect a reduction in the quality of the service and safety they have come to expect from Vivalon, despite a \$1.0m to \$1.5m increase in costs.

Besides the potential safety and service impact on our vulnerable paratransit riders, the impact on Marin County's community and local businesses will also be significant. In a recent count, Vivalon has long term relationships with at least a dozen local businesses who support our paratransit contract with Marin Transit, and who have no current relationship with Transdev. With many Marin non-profits and local businesses already struggling with the effects of the pandemic, the trickledown effect of this decision to Marin County businesses could be very troubling to many businesses already struggling financially.

Additionally, for over 65 years, Vivalon has been providing critical services to Marin County's most vulnerable populations, including our growing number of aging adults, people living with disabilities and our low-income communities. Over the last 50 years, through providing these critical services to our community, the Marin Transit paratransit services provided by Vivalon have proved to be an investment in our community, as any surpluses are reinvested in to our other Vivalon program services within Marin County. That's a model that makes sense, community tax dollars, supporting community service needs, being reinvested in the community. Awarding the contract to Transdev instead means investing in a multi-national organization, with surpluses padding the pockets of their shareholders. That is a business model that doesn't seem to make sense or benefit our community, as it invests our local and state funding in a foreign company.

Finally, we received the agenda that included the rationale for the award of this contract to Transdev only four hours before this protest filing was due. In that agenda, there are minutes from a special meeting, that Vivalon did not receive notification of, that state the General Manager of Marin Transit assured the board that all vendors were encouraged to increase salaries and benefits. This is the opposite of what was asked of Vivalon in our current contract with Marin transit, including in our Cost Amendment #5 earlier this year. In fact, Marin Transit denied our request to permanently increase driver wages in negotiating that amendment. We dispute the outcome of this RFP adamantly on the basis that we were recently discouraged from increasing salaries. In further support of this protest, we were told on the call regarding presenting our BAFO that it was an opportunity to “sharpen our pencils”, which appears misleading and disingenuous of Marin Transit, as it was perceived we should reduce costs in our proposal, which is predominantly wage related.

Vivalon, known for its consistent, high-quality services and unmatched customer service, is a critical resource for Marin County and our most vulnerable citizens. I ask the board to please consider this when voting on the suggested change to the Marin Access service provider.

#98 From: Susan Kolb
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

I am very distressed to have recently learned that you are considering awarding the paratransit contract to another vendor. Vivalon has provided excellent service in this arena for over 50 years and has submitted the most affordable bid for this service. I find it unconscionable that you are even considering this other bid from a foreign vendor. It leads one to believe that someone on the transit board is benefitting from this contract. This type of politics gives our country's entire system a bad name. More corruption. You should be ashamed.

#99 From: Barbara Brown
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Board Members: My name is Barbara Brown and I want to convey to you my strong support for Vivalon. In my role as Executive Director of LITA (Love is the Answer), I have had the opportunity to collaborate with Vivalon in our Caring Connections program. In fact, the idea for the program came from Vivalon's dedicated drivers who noticed that older people with whom they were coming into contact were lonely and socially isolated. LITA is a nonprofit organization that brings happiness, friendship and meaning to the lives of lonely and socially isolated older people in Marin, by providing volunteers for connection. LITA and Vivalon created the Caring Connections program because of important feedback from the drivers. LITA also is familiar with Vivalon because we use Vivalon's transportation service for our Seniors in the Park program. We have had an outstanding experience. It has been a seamless process to arrange the transportation. The drivers are punctual, warm, respectful, and safety conscious. The drivers are very good with our older population, which requires patience, kindness and knowledge of medical devices. They make a point of knowing them as individuals, and that makes all the difference. You simply cannot assign a point value or a dollar figure to helping our older Marin citizens feel comfortable and appreciated. Vivalon's stellar 45 years of Paratransit Division experience working with Marin seniors, and 67 years of service to Marin overall would seem to me to be the perfect experience for this contract. Vivalon has a long, successful record of service in Marin. It is a nonprofit organization that is known and trusted. Vivalon has community

support. I am having a hard time understanding why a local nonprofit organization with a stellar track record is being passed over for a large, international for-profit company. As Marin residents, we are encouraged to shop local, and I do. I believe in supporting my community. Why are we considering hiring an international for-profit company to do something that Vivalon has done well for so long, especially considering that Vivalon had the lower cost? Please consider allowing Vivalon to receive the contract and keep our funding in Marin. Thank you for considering my thoughts and for all you are doing for our County.

#100 From: Claudia Tomaso
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board, Please keep Marin Marin! Whistlestop/Vivalon is a LOCAL NON-profit with a 50-year track record of successfully serving Marin's seniors and disabled populations. Their service has been exemplary and reliable. Choosing a FOR-profit, French owned alternative is unacceptable.

#101 From: Margaret Mackenzie-Hooson
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Please consider supporting Vivalon/Whistlestop Wheels in allocating it the Marin Transit paratransit contract. It is extremely important to support a local nonprofit business which has been supplying excellent service and making such a welcome difference in transport to the health and wellbeing in so many peoples' lives for so many years.

#102 From: Liz Capurro
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

To Whom It May Concern, As a long term resident of Marin County, Whistlestop/Vivalon has been a pillar in our community. I have watched their buses and vans allow individuals the resources needed to be mobile and feel a bigger part of Marin. As far back as 1972 I remember seeing the Whistlestop logo and paratransit vans and felt so proud that we have a community that caters to many in need. It is disappointing that Marin Transit would pivot to a for profit international company as opposed to a long standing not for profit organization. This boils down to finances, not loyalty for our community and the people who live, work, and volunteer in Marin. Shame on you Marin Transit, shame on you.

#102 From: Katalin Pesti
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Marin Transit Board Members, thank you for inviting me to join the panel today.

I became Vivalon's new CEO on February 15, 2021. On my second day at Vivalon, I did a paratransit ride-along with Cliff Crowder who is one of our drivers. We had such a great day. Two things really stuck with me from my first ride along and from every ride since then: First, the joy our drivers have serving the community as part of Vivalon and second, the difference our drivers make for the people we serve. Cliff had a smile on his face the entire day and greeted each rider with sheer joy... A woman we picked up at Marin Health had received some very bad news that she shared with Cliff and by the time he dropped her at her apartment, her look of despair had changed to a smile. Her relief was palpable. This woman has no family nearby and right then and there, I saw what an integral part of Vivalon's mission was served by Whistlestop Wheels paratransit – the power of human connection.

I am before you today to request that you delay deciding to replace Vivalon with Transdev as Marin County's paratransit service contractor. Changing providers from a safe, trusted, local Marin County nonprofit who provided the very first paratransit ride in Marin County, to an international for-profit corporation with its U.S. headquarters based in Chicago and a safety record 4 times worse than Vivalon's is not what is best for the community.

The recommendation citing the reasons for this change to award the contract to Transdev was published just 3 business days ago... last Wednesday, September 8 right before 1:00 p.m. Vivalon's protest letter was due per the RFP instructions by 5:00 p.m. the same day. We received a response to that protest letter after 4:30 p.m. Friday afternoon; refuting our ten listed concerns without substantive answers.

There is no compelling reason for this rush to judgment. It is vital that Vivalon and citizens in Marin County have the opportunity to learn the real reasons the scoring was so disparate on subjective matters and why Vivalon's much superior safety record did not play a much more important factor. Marin Transit has stated that this is a "Best Value Proposal not solely based on price" and contends that higher wages and benefits and better technology are the main reasons for this dramatic change in providers.

Vivalon's history with this contract make these explanations puzzling at best. The fact is that it has been fight after fight with Marin Transit every time Vivalon has attempted to increase wages for its paratransit contract employees.

Regarding "better technology," Marin Transit has mandated the use of Trapeze, which Vivalon has used successfully. There was only one time where there was a significant issue using Trapeze, which occurred when Marin Transit and Trapeze updated the software. The "updated" software gave directions to nonexistent routes and incorrect streets to our drivers, which was a problem outside of Vivalon's control. We have capable IT support and this had nothing to do with Whistlestop Wheels' capabilities to maximize the software.

This important decision feels very rushed. I urge you to delay voting on this matter to explore important questions about the disparity in the subjective RFP scoring and determine why respective safety records do not appear to have a significant weight in Marin Transit's recommendation. Slowing this down will also allow Vivalon time to investigate recently obtained information regarding potential bias and conflicts of interest regarding one or more members involved in the process. Vivalon has requested information listing the people involved in the RFP process and we have not yet received this information. A quick google search of a consultant hired by Marin Transit shows "Senior Vice President Business Development for

Transdev North America” in the search engine results which we feel deserves an explanation. It was also not disclosed to Vivalon that the consultant who participated on the RFP interview panel via Zoom was a former General Manager of Marin Transit.

Even if the federal procurement procedures have been followed perfectly, that does not guarantee that the evaluation of the proposals was fair and unbiased to serve the best interests of paratransit riders and taxpayers. I urge you to ask questions to understand the disparity in very subjective areas of scoring.

This decision is NOT just about switching vendors. It’s a decision about severing ties with a trusted community nonprofit with a human touch and drivers and staff who show up every single day, including holidays, even in the height of the pandemic, to serve our community. Vivalon does not make a profit on this contract. We are advocating to keep the Marin Access contract because it is an integral part of our mission.

The Marin community counts on Vivalon for jobs, services, springing to action nimbly in a crisis, and so much more that cannot be expected from a multi-national provider. We believe that the recommendation to move to Transdev is not in the best interest of the riders of paratransit or the Marin community.

Based on hundreds of letters of gratitude, we know that our riders and their families also view Vivalon as a trusted and reliable partner that enables these community members to remain independent and get where they need to go.

All of us attending this meeting today may need paratransit services someday and you will not find a more dedicated team of professionals that excel in their roles. Vivalon is focused on people’s need for human connection. No amount of technology can replace what our driver, Cliff, and all of his Whistlestop Wheels colleagues who are dedicated to Vivalon’s mission do for people every single day.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

#103 From: Erick Vallalobos
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Marin Transit Board Members,

Good morning. My name is Erick Villalobos. I am the General Manager of transportation for Vivalon and I joined Vivalon in the October 2019 after 30 years of public service with UCSF.

Vivalon, known for its consistent, high-quality services and impeccable safety record has provided paratransit service for Marin County residents for over 50 years. During this period, Vivalon created a stellar driver safety and training program, and continued to focus on safety over the years as one of our top priorities. Vivalon’s dedication to providing and maintaining a culture of safety has resulted in empowering our drivers to be one of the best trained paratransit operators in the Bay Area and demonstrated by our proven safety record. Vivalon has a stronger safety record than Transdev. Vivalon’s accident rate per 100K miles for FY16-FY18

was .027, while the SFMTA Triennial Performance Audit reports that Transdev's safety record during that time frame averaged .107. Vivalon's safety record is four times better than Transdev. Why is this relevant? One reason provided by Marin Transit to support the recommendation to award the contract states that Transdev's "Formalized Standard Operating Procedures will provide a consistent, reliable customer experience" but paramount to customer service is safety for both clients and the general public at large.

Enhanced Technology is another area that Marin Transit cited as part of their reasoning to award the contract to Transdev with statements regarding their "Enhanced, 24-hour IT expected to reduce delays in resolving customer issues and Additional customer facing tools, such as scheduling apps are offered." Marin Transit is providing the same software package we currently use (Trapeze) and Vivalon already has 24/7 IT support with an additional in-house IT Specialist to assist in supporting the software. Vivalon has not experienced any software issues or service outages due to during the current contract period. However, it's important to point out that using technology to help us schedule and book trips efficiently is one thing and a skill set that Vivalon's call center staff does well. Vivalon is not against system improvements or enhancements to be efficient, however, we must not forget who we serve. Our clients are not tech-saavy and the vast majority of our clients are not smart phone or app users. Our clients deal with physical and cognitive challenges that requires more human connection, patience and understanding, as our drivers, call center, and support staff provide on a daily basis-- not technology.

#103 From: Richard Sobol
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

My name is Richard Sobol, I'm a Road Supervisor at Vivalon going on my 7th year. After leaving the for-profit business world I wanted to do some good. I was looking to give back to my community. I think I've been lucky to find an organization that works so tirelessly and is so dedicated to serving seniors and people with disabilities – I'm especially proud of our drivers. Over these years, I learned a lot about courage. I came to see the importance of every life – especially our most fragile. I'm reminded with my own challenges to pause and be grateful. A lot has changed in this relatively short time. From technology to the addition of some great people, we continue to focus on serving our vulnerable community. Many of us have become very close and integral to the well-being of our clients. At Vivalon we continue to brainstorm and ask the tough questions. How can we improve? How can we do a better job? If there is a blind spot, what is it? If we can find a solution to what's missing, what would it be? How can we make it happen? Living and serving in Marin is a source of tremendous pride. Exploring how we can better serve our community is a mission for all of us. As I think about our partnership with Marin Transit, I like to think we're in it together. I like to think we can help each other be better. I was disheartened learning of the Transdev award. I bet they're a good company. I have nothing against them. When weighing the best choice did this really come down to one company got 8% , other company 7%? As isin any long-standing relationship, it's about communication. It's easy to go on to the next one. Yet, if you want the same thing and you have most of what you want – seems Seems to me you recommit and try to make it work. Here we are – Vivalon. and Marin Transit. I can't imagine how we came to this outcome. But I can say with certainty, if Marin Transit wants an organization with heart and determination and is willing to partner with us to be great and create solutions - reconsider your award. Then, add \$1 million to our proposal. We will not fail you. Together we will be a model for Paratransit excellence.

#104 From: Nancy Scott
Date: 9/12/2021
Comment:

Please reconsider your decision not to use Vivalon, formerly WhistleStop, for para transit transportation. They have done a good job in the past and have a proven track record.

#105 From: Tamar Saunders
Date: 9/13/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board Members: Eden Housing is an affordable housing development and property management non-profit organization that has been providing affordable homes in California for the past 53 years. We see an ever-increasing need for affordable homes where lower-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities are able to live safely and with dignity in our communities. Eden has partnered with Vivalon (formerly known as Whistlestop) to develop a new project we call the Healthy Aging Campus in downtown San Rafael that would provide a new senior center and 67 units of affordable housing for seniors in one mixed-use building. Vivalon, as our partner during the almost decade long development of this project, has been one of the most trusted and beloved community serving organizations in the County. As affordable housing providers, we see how their services are so important to the population we serve. We are very concerned about the impact of replacing a local, nonprofit like Vivalon with a for-profit, international company, like Transdev for paratransit services in the county. Vivalon has been a reliable partner to Marin Transit for over 50 years. In addition, we know that riders already have established relationships with Vivalon's paratransit drivers, which is crucially important to riders feeling comfortable and stable with Vivalon's proven and reliable transportation services. We request that you reconsider the award of the paratransit contract to Transdev and consider using a local, established nonprofit that has been providing excellent, reliable and caring services for over 50 years. Thank you for your consideration.

#106 From: Mark Galperin
Date: 9/13/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board Members, I've just learned that Marin Transit DID NOT select Whistlestop Wheels by Vivalon, a local non-profit, to continue providing paratransit services to Marin County. Whistlestop is a LOCAL NON-profit with a 50-year track record of successfully serving Marin's seniors and disabled populations. Their service has been exemplary and reliable. I think that replacing Whistlestop with for-profit corporation as Marin Transit will negatively impact disabled, aged, vulnerable part of the people of the County of Marin. Please reconsider your decision.

#107 From: Annette Pirrone
Date: 9/13/2021
Comment:

To hire a for-profit national company is contrary to everything we, the public, have been striving to preserve in our county. We must continue supporting local businesses, and especially those that has been serving the community so generously! Please stop this process...it makes no sense if you are concerned about honesty justice!

#108 From: Lynne Law
Date: 9/13/2021
Comment:

I am writing to object to the decision made by Marin Transit to select another provider of services. From my longtime experience of living in Marin, I have heard nothing but excellent things about Vivalon. Please reconsider your decision and re-instate Vivalon for their loyal, safe and excellent services.

#109 From: John and Virginia Marquez
Date: 9/13/2021
Comment:

Dear Marin Transit Board, I, John G. Marquez, and my wife, Virginia Marquez, residents of the City of Novato, and Marin County, respectfully, but vigorously oppose the transition of para-transit services and food delivery from Vivalon to a French based company. We have been long time financial contributors to Vivalon and Whistlestop Wheels for transportation needs and home delivery to the elderly and physically challenged residents of both Novato and Marin County. As senior citizens we have reached an age when we ourselves might now have to depend on a known provider as competent and reliable as Vivalon and Whistlestop Wheels for transportation. There is currently a very strong emphasis on supporting local companies and businesses of all kinds within our area, and the entire Bay area. We even have intention to provide a small endowment to other local service such as "The North Marin Charity Organization" in our will. Why is a foreign multi-national company being selected for the new contract when Vivalon submitted the lowest cost proposal for renewal of their contract? What is the justification for awarding a more costly contract, and where will the funds come from to fund the increase? Will taxes be raised? Will other transit fees be increased? Vivalon should not be placed in a position of spending legal fees to protest this recommendation. Please reconsider this unfathomable choice and renew the contract with Vivalon. Sincerely, John G. Marquez and Virginia Marquez