



# agenda

Subject: **Marin Transit Ad Hoc Committee on School Transportation**

Location: **Terrace Room**  
**Room 326, Marin Civic Center**  
**3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael**

Date: **Monday July 18, 2016**

Time: **12:15-2:15 PM**

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1. Summary of Coordinated Countywide Student Transportation Study and Board Workshop
2. Results of Request for Information from Yellow Bus Providers
3. Status of Parking and Facility Needs and Issues
4. Recommendations for Short and Long Term Yellow Bus Funding
5. FY16/17 Timeline to Implement Phase I (meeting handout)









# **Summary of Countywide Student Transportation Study and Board Workshop**

Marin Transit Ad Hoc Committee on Student Transportation

*July 18, 2016*

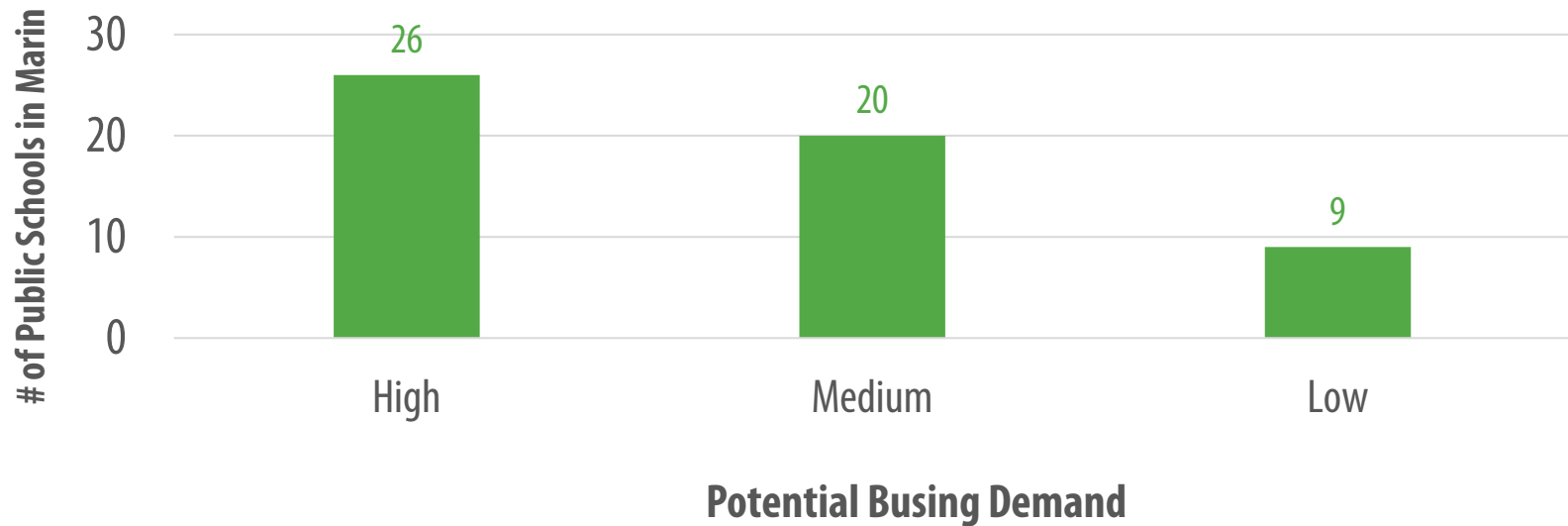
# School Bus Models

	 <b>Yellow Bus</b>	 <b>Supplemental</b>
Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designed specifically for children</li> <li>High Capacity</li> <li>Low vehicle cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers opportunities to share with other public transit services – increased efficiencies</li> </ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenging to share equipment across programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State and federal regulation limit flexibility</li> <li>Service is <b>not</b> designed specifically for younger riders</li> </ul>
Current Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most common form of home-to-school transportation</li> <li>5 Districts + Marin Transit provide</li> <li>2 (in-house), 4 (under contract)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marin Transit offers 9 routes serving 13 schools including all high schools, two middle schools, two elementary schools, and one private school</li> <li>At capacity, no ability to expand due to equipment</li> </ul>
Future Applicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on <b>elementary</b> and <b>middle schools</b> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on <b>high schools</b> </li> </ul>



*No single organization is solely responsible for home to school transportation*



# Busing Demand Summary



- All high schools and most middle schools are “high” demand
- All “high” demand schools except those in Mill Valley and Kentfield School Districts have some level of bus service today

# Demand Projections



	 <b>Yellow Bus</b>	 <b>Supplemental</b>	<b>Total</b>
Current Students	2,800	1,000	3,800
Potential New Students	+3,900	+700	+4,600
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>6,700</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>8,400</b>

Current Mode Split = **13%**, Potential Mode Split = **30%**



*Yellow bus provides the best opportunity to increase “green trip” rates and mitigate traffic congestion*



*School bus service is costly to operate and requires a significant investment in capital*

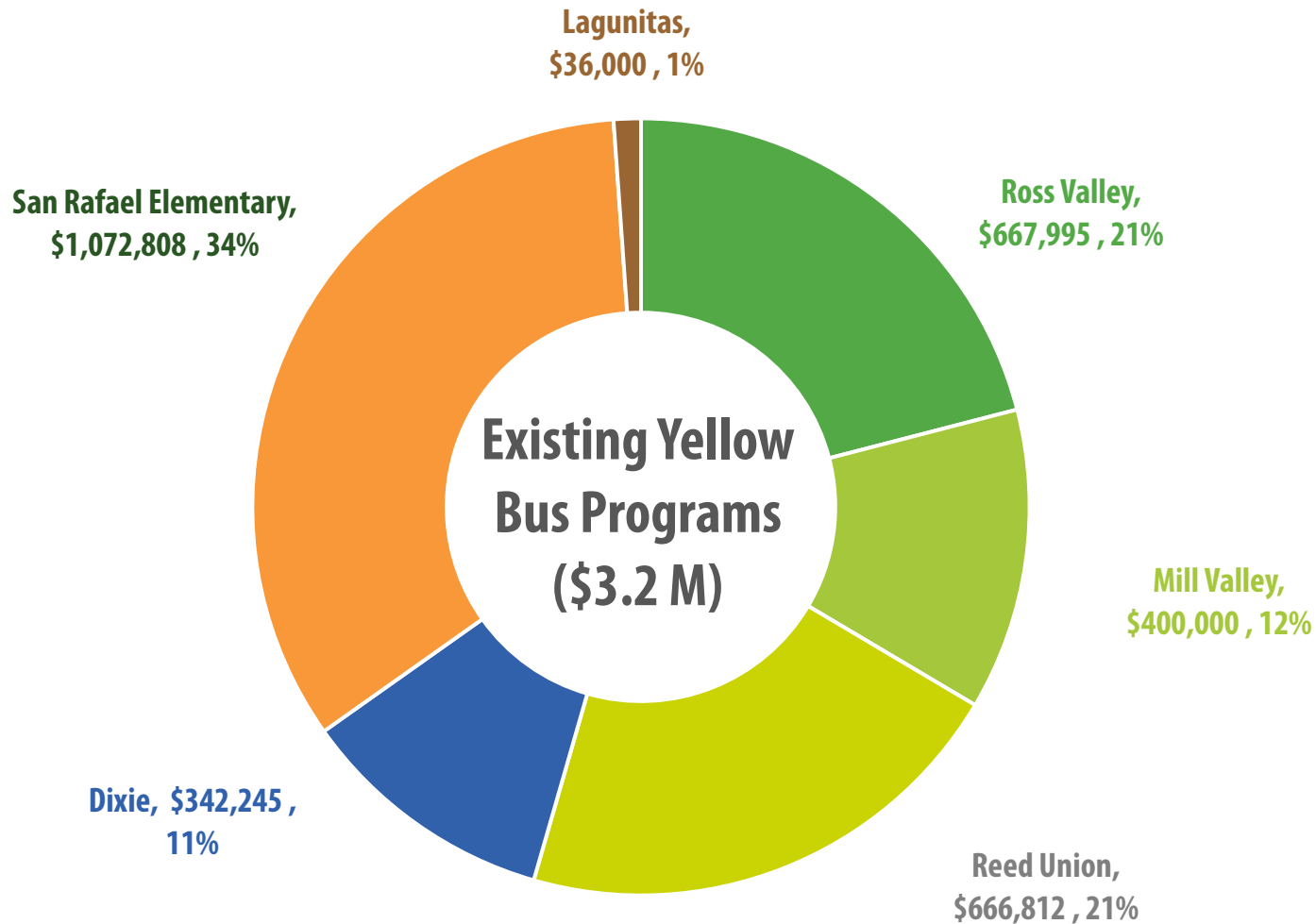
- Annual operating costs: \$6.8 – \$8.2 million
- Annualized capital costs: \$2.4 million
- **Annual total costs: ~ \$10 million**



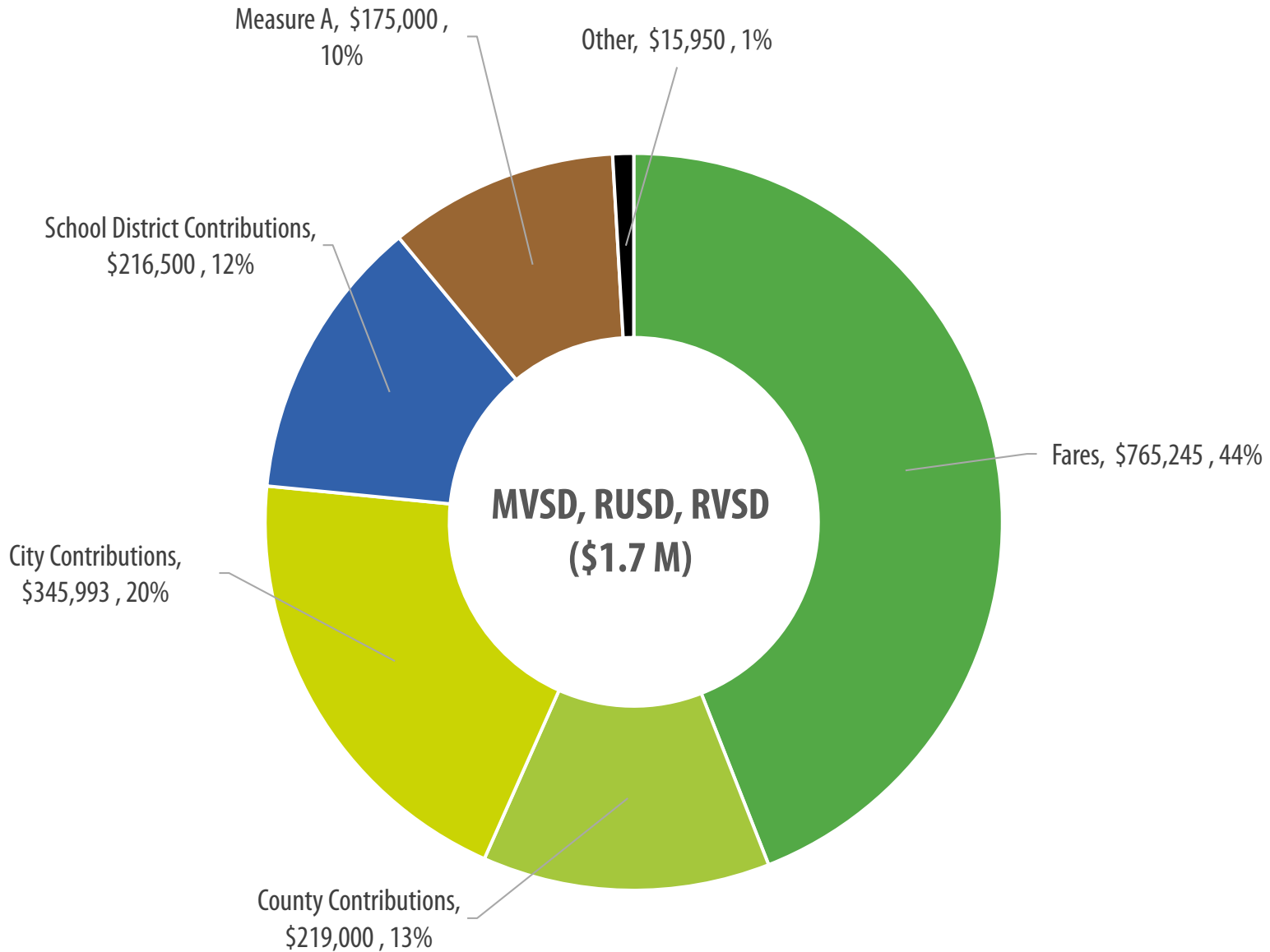
*There is no single, dedicated funding source for home-to-school bus transportation*

- Potential Revenue Sources (high likelihood in Marin)
  - Statewide Home to School Transportation (LCFF Add-on funding)
  - City or School Contributions
  - Parcel Taxes (County, School, or JPA)
  - New Countywide Transportation Sales Tax

# Existing Program Expenses (All Yellow Bus) FY 16/17 Estimate



# MVSD, RUSD, and RVSD Revenue Summary FY 16/17 Estimate







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July 18, 2016

Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee  
Marin County Transit District  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SUBJECT: Yellow School Bus Industry Request for Information  
Summary of Response**

**board of directors**

Dear Board Members:

kathrin sears  
president  
supervisor district 3

katie rice  
vice president  
supervisor district 2

stephanie moulton-peters  
2nd vice president  
city of mill valley

judy arnold  
director  
supervisor district 5

maribeth bushey  
director  
city of san rafael

damon connolly  
director  
supervisor district 1

steve kinsey  
director  
supervisor district 4

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2015, Marin County Transit District (Marin Transit) was involved in two Invitation for Bid processes. One for the Mill Valley School District and the other was a consolidated bid for yellow school bus service to San Rafael, Reed Union, and Ross Valley school districts. In both instances there was little to no interest from the school bus industry to bid on the projects. As interest within Marin County grows for offering yellow school bus service as a means to reduce traffic congestion, it will be important to have a bid process that encourages participation and competition.

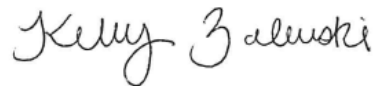
On May 24, 2016, Marin Transit issued a Request for Information (RFI) to eight companies that provide yellow school bus service. The purpose of the RFI was to solicit information from firms experienced in providing school bus services. Responses were due back to Marin Transit by 3:00 pm Pacific Time on June 17, 2016. By the RFI deadline, no written responses were received. All recipients were then contacted by phone to understand why they did not respond. As a result of these calls, verbal feedback was collected from four of the RFI recipients: First Student, Michael's Transportation, MV Transportation, and MetroTrans.

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES:**

Two main barriers to doing business in Marin County were identified by all four companies: driver shortage and parking availability. Their main concern is that quality is compromised when the buses and drivers are coming from outside the county. In addition, companies must include the overhead cost for parking and maintenance facilities in their bid which increases the cost of the service. If companies do not believe that they can provide service that is reliable and profitable, then they will not bid.

In conclusion, Marin Transit can increase the interest in their bids by providing a yard for parking within the county. Companies will be even more likely to bid if Marin County provides the bus fleet. In light of the fact that these are long term solutions, Marin Transit can make some adjustments to bids in the short term to improve interest and the quality of the contracts. For example, Marin Transit can offer contracts longer than three years which allows the operator to monetize costs over a longer period of time. Marin Transit can also set a wage standard for drivers in the contract in order to reduce the likelihood that drivers will be recruited away from their positions for a more desirable compensation package elsewhere.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Zalewski".

Kelly Zalewski  
School Operations Analyst



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July 18, 2016

Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee  
Marin County Transit District  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SUBJECT: Yellow School Bus Parking in Marin County**

**board of directors**

kathrin sears  
president  
supervisor district 3

katie rice  
vice president  
supervisor district 2

stephanie moulton-peters  
2nd vice president  
city of mill valley

judy arnold  
director  
supervisor district 5

maribeth bushey  
director  
city of san rafael

damon connolly  
director  
supervisor district 1

steve kinsey  
director  
supervisor district 4

Dear Board Members:

**BACKGROUND:**

Last school year, Marin Transit executed a contract with Michael's Transportation to provide yellow school bus service to Ross Valley School District that included a price reduction for services if Marin Transit secured parking for seven yellow school buses within Marin County. To achieve this savings Marin County agreed to let Marin Transit use County owned space located at 1600 Los Gamos, San Rafael, CA 94903. The County agreed to let Marin Transit use this space for bus parking for \$1.00 for a ten-month agreement. This agreement expired on June 30, 2016.

While parking for a few school buses within Marin County appears to be an easy task, it is in fact difficult to find a space that meets all of the school bus operator's requirements and does not meet opposition from neighbors. For example, Marin Transit had contracted a second location for yellow school bus parking for the 2015/16 school year at the College of Marin Kentfield campus. However, the contract was cancelled when neighbors complained.

Late in the school year, Marin Transit was able to lease a weekday parking location at Christ Church Lutheran in Fairfax to allow buses to stage closer to the school sites. Marin Transit pays \$100 per month for this month-to-month parking. This is a temporary parking solution as the site is slated for re-development as senior housing.

Parking for school buses within Marin County is limited and difficult to find. Three school districts in Marin County, San Rafael, Dixie, and Novato have bus yards which are currently at capacity.

The three contracts in which Marin Transit is involved, Reed Union, Ross Valley, and Mill Valley school districts, have a combined 15 buses plus two spares that need parking within the County for the 2016/17 school year in order to keep their contract rates low. The

Town of Tiburon, a member of the JPA managing yellow school bus service for Reed Union School District, pursued parking within the boundaries of the city but was unable to secure an agreement. Mill Valley School District has also been working hard to find parking and has met obstacles to finalizing an agreement which allows for overnight parking as well as mid-day parking. At this time, Marin Transit is working with Marin County to negotiate an agreement which provides enough space for all 17 buses to park overnight throughout the school year. Marin County has offered a limited term contract for parking at the 1600 Los Gamos site for \$150 per month per bus (a total of \$2,550 per month).

Marin Transit expects that more school districts will be interested in offering yellow school bus service in the near future. In order to ensure sustainable growth and cost stability of the yellow school bus program, securing a long term parking facility within the County that can accommodate 25 buses is required. By having a parking facility within the County, bus operators will be more likely to bid on the work, service will be more reliable, and contract costs will be lower.

Based on the current market for bus parking, Marin Transit expects it will cost between \$.20 - \$.30 per square foot to lease a paved, fenced, and lit lot that allows for light maintenance on the vehicles. To accommodate 25 buses plus parking for the driver's personal vehicles, at least a half-acre parcel of land would be needed.

Marin Transit applied to the Transportation Authority of Marin for One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Cycle 2 funds from the Safe Routes to Schools or local funding source in the amount of \$864,000. This would be matched with \$112,000 in Marin Transit Measure A funds, for a total project amount of \$976,000. These funds would be used to plan for and lease or buy a site for school bus parking. TAM is expected to release recommendations for OBAG 2 funding in late July 2016.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

FY 16/17: make an arrangement to lease space at 1600 Los Gamos for 15 buses and two spares from the County of Marin for a fixed term.

FY 17/18: either continue to lease space at 1600 Los Gamos for the appropriate capacity of buses needed at that time or lease at least a half-acre site within the county that is paved, fenced, and lit for bus parking.

Long term: purchase a site within the county that can accommodate the growth of the yellow bus program and the buses used for the supplemental school routes and county wide fixed public routes. New funding would be required to purchase the site.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara Duffy  
Deputy General Manager



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July 18, 2016

Student Transportation Ad Hoc Committee  
Marin County Transit District  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SUBJECT: Recommendations for Short and Long Term Home-to-School Bus Transportation**

**board of directors**

Dear Board Members:

kathrin sears  
president  
supervisor district 3

katie rice  
vice president  
supervisor district 2

stephanie moulton-peters  
2nd vice president  
city of mill valley

judy arnold  
director  
supervisor district 5

maribeth bushey  
director  
city of san rafael

damon connolly  
director  
supervisor district 1

steve kinsey  
director  
supervisor district 4

**OVERVIEW:**

In May of 2016, your Ad Hoc Subcommittee met to begin the discussion on how to advance home-to-school bus transportation in Marin County. Using the recommendations of the Countywide School Transportation Study and updated information from recent experience with this area of service, staff put together DRAFT recommendations for a three phase implementation plan. This plan includes assumptions for how the service would be allocated and how the programs would be funded. These recommendations are developed to start the discussion and consider key questions such as who will manage the program, who will be included in the program, when their participation will be possible, what capital investments are needed, how much money will it cost, and how will it be funded.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The following recommendations are summarized and presented in four scenarios. These include the current condition as well as three additional phases of growth and expansion. Recommendations are based on the following underlying goals of a countywide busing program:

- Provide comprehensive yellow bus service to K-8 public schools that demonstrate high or medium need
  - Contracted service for operation and maintenance
- Expand supplemental transit program for all 9-12 public schools
  - Contracted service for operation and maintenance
- Purchase a new fleet of buses to provide yellow bus and supplemental service
  - Create a more reliable service and a reduced operating cost

## **DRAFT Recommendations – For Discussion Purposes Only**

- Purchase a temporary and/or permanent facility to park and maintain all vehicles
  - Create a more stable operation, encouraging competition for the work, and reducing operating costs
- Create a new division of Marin Transit or a new Government Agency to oversee operations and maintenance contract

### **Current (FY 2016/17)**

1. Establish Marin Transit's role in administration and funding support. Work with Ross Valley (RVSD), Reed Union (RUSD) and Mill Valley (MVSD) school districts to implement this relationship for next year.
2. Secure temporary parking for 17 vehicles
3. Work with other high needs districts (Kentfield and Larkspur Corte Madera) to start yellow bus planning for FY 2017/18
4. Work with TAM on developing a new Countywide funding measure for capital and operations related to the program

### **Phase 1**

1. Implement Kentfield (KSD) and Larkspur - Corte Madera (LCMSD) programs
2. Secure parking for at least 25 vehicles
3. Work with existing programs in San Rafael and Dixie to discuss their participation in a countywide program
4. Work with TAM to develop a new sales tax Measure
5. Repurpose supplemental transit buses previously used in Larkspur – Corte Madera to Redwood HS

### **Phase 2 (post new measure)**

1. Secure permanent parking and maintenance for at least 75 yellow bus vehicles
2. Purchase new fleet of 75 yellow buses and 18 transit buses
3. Issue master operations and maintenance contract for Countywide yellow bus program
4. Transition San Rafael and Dixie operations into the program (if desired)
5. Continue expansion at all other high needs schools

### **Phase 3 (post new measure)**

1. Expand yellow bus to all medium schools including Novato USD
2. Continue supplemental expansion at all high schools

### **FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS:**

Staff made a number of assumptions in developing a financial picture for the recommendations. Attachment A shows a summary of the estimated annual expenses for home-to-school transportation for yellow bus and supplemental school service. Attachment B shows a summary of the funding assumptions specific to yellow bus and Attachment C shows a summary of the funding assumptions by phase for the supplemental school program. The following is a summary of assumptions made in developing these financial plans.

### **Current (FY 2016/17)**

## **DRAFT Recommendations – For Discussion Purposes Only**

- Programs will be funded based on approved budgets and anticipated pass sales
- Parking at Los Gamos is provided

### **Phase 1**

- Operations costs for RUSD and MVSD would escalate in based on current contract terms
- RVSD operations costs would increase by 20%
- A new capital cost to park yellow buses is assumed at \$60,000 per year
- Existing programs (MVSD, RUSD, RVSD) would continue to be funded by the same funding sources and percent shares as in FY 2016/17
- LCMSD and KSD costs would be covered by the same funding sources as the existing programs
- Marin Transit would shift \$75,000 in Measure A funds from the provision of supplemental school service to support yellow bus service in LCMSD. This funding would be considered “seed money” and would be withdrawn once a permanent source of funds is found
- Supplemental service previously provided to LCMSD would be shifted to Redwood High School

### **Phase 2 (post new measure)**

- New countywide money is available to support expansion for both supplemental and yellow bus programs
- A new facility and fleet are assumed for yellow bus at an annual cost of \$330,000 and \$1.8 M per year, respectively.
- 18 additional vehicles are available to support supplemental service at an annual cost of \$795,000 per year.
- New countywide money is used to support 100% of capital costs (fleet and facility) and 50% of operating costs for yellow bus and supplemental service
  - Remaining 50% of total yellow bus operating costs would be covered by fares (40% of total) and local contributions (10% of total). Pass prices are estimated at \$250 each way or \$500 annually. Local contributions are estimated at approximately \$8,000 per bus/per year.
  - Remaining 50% of total supplemental transit operating costs would be covered by fares (44% of total), current Measure A (5%), and other funding sources (1%).

### **Phase 3 (post new measure)**

- New countywide money is available to support expansion for both supplemental and yellow bus programs
- A new facility and fleet are assumed for yellow bus at an annual cost of \$525,000 and \$1.8 M per year, respectively.
- 18 additional vehicles are available to support supplemental at an annual cost of \$795,000 per year.

**DRAFT Recommendations – For Discussion Purposes Only**

- Operating costs for yellow bus are assumed to decrease once facility and fleet are available. The assumed cost is \$100,000 per year/per bus or a daily rate of approximately \$555/day.
- New countywide money is used to support 100% of capital costs (fleet and facility) and 50% of operating costs for yellow bus and supplemental
  - Remaining 50% of total yellow bus operating costs would be covered by fares (40% of total) and local contributions (10% of total). Pass prices are estimated at \$250 each way of \$500 annually.
  - Remaining 50% of total supplemental transit operating costs would be covered by fares (44% of total), current Measure A (5%), and other funding sources (1%).

Respectfully submitted,



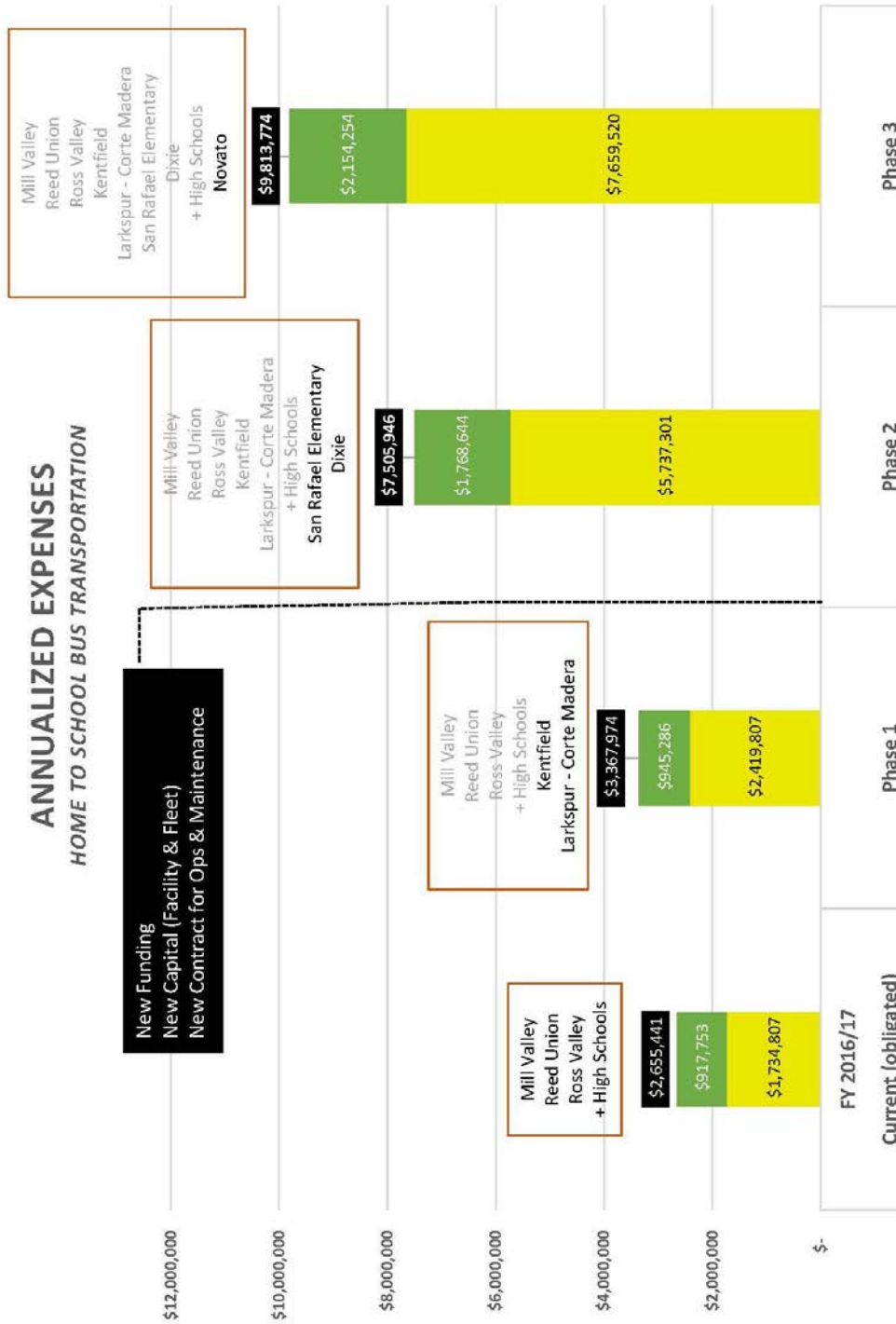
Robert Betts  
Director of Planning and Operations

Attachment A: Annualized Operating Expenses by Program, by Phase  
Attachment B: Yellow Bus Funding by Phase  
Attachment C: Supplemental Transit Funding by Phase

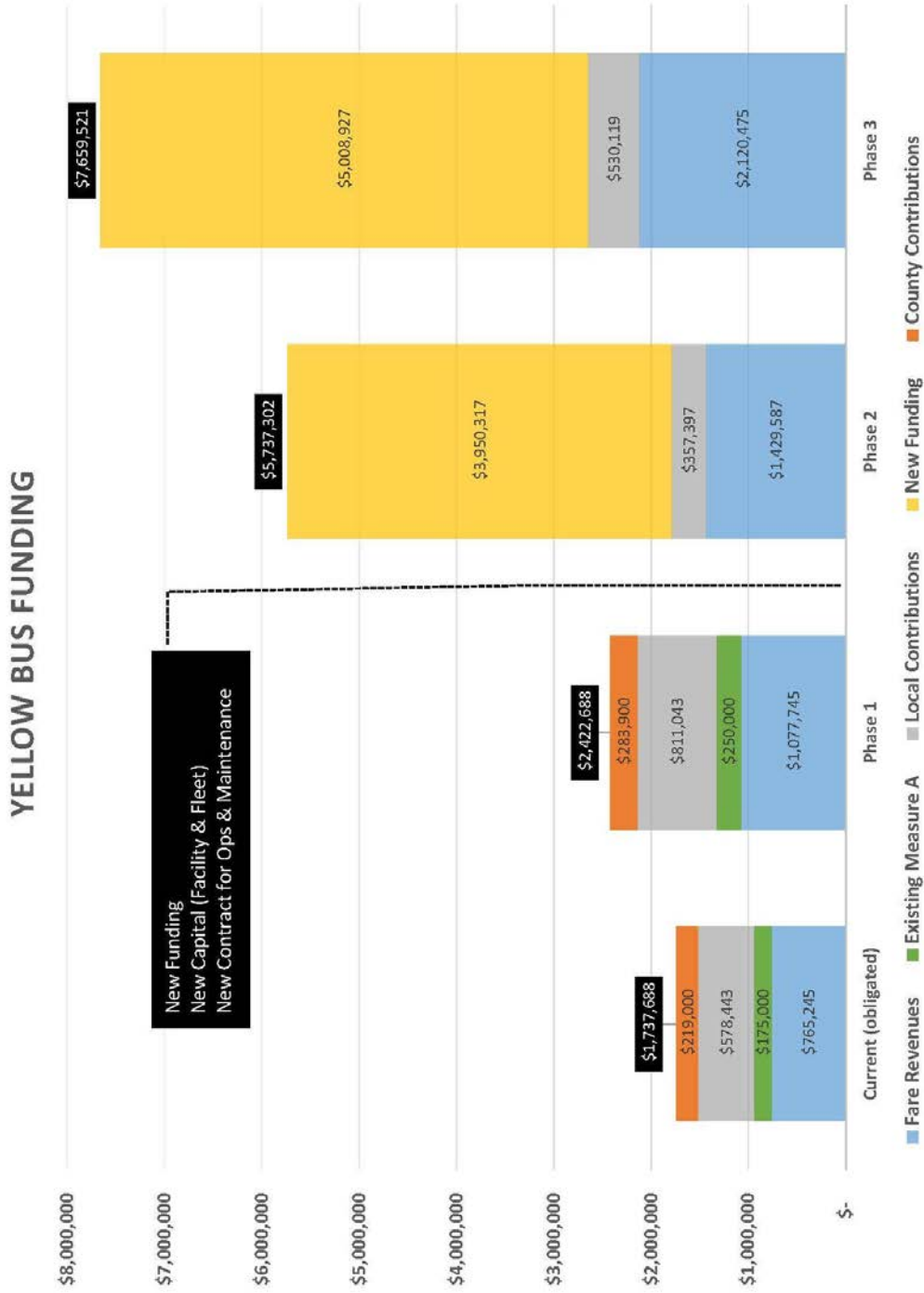


**DRAFT Recommendations – For Discussion Purposes Only**

**Attachment A: Annualized Operating Expenses by Program, Phase**



Attachment B: Yellow Bus Funding by Phase



**DRAFT Recommendations – For Discussion Purposes Only**

Attachment C: Supplemental Transit Funding by Phase

