

# Marin Transit & Marin Access

## Fare & Eligibility Policy Change Proposal

### FAQ

#### **BASICS OF MARIN TRANSIT AND MARIN ACCESS**

##### **What is Marin Transit?**

Marin County Transit District (Marin Transit) was formed by a vote of the people of Marin County in 1964 and was given the responsibility for providing local transit service within Marin County. Marin Transit contracts for operations and maintenance of services. Staff are directly responsible for planning, capital investments, financial management, and operations oversight.

##### **What is Marin Access?**

Marin Access is a suite of programs that Marin Transit offers older adults and people with disabilities for getting around without driving. Whether you need to learn how to ride the fixed route bus or sign up for an alternative transportation service, we are here to help.

##### **Where does the funding for Marin Transit and Marin Access come from?**

Marin Transit is financially supported by Measure AA Funds, Measure B Funds, State Transportation Development Act Funds, fares, property taxes and Federal Section 5311 rural transit funds.

##### **What does fixed route mean?**

Fixed route means any system of transporting individuals along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule. Marin Transit fixed route services include all local routes, Stagecoach, and school routes.

##### **What does demand response mean?**

Demand response means any system of transporting individuals which is not a fixed route system. Marin Transit demand response services include Marin Access Paratransit, Dial-A-Ride, and Catch-A-Ride services.

##### **What is paratransit?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transit agencies that provide fixed-route service to provide "complementary paratransit" service to people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route bus or rail service because of a disability. The ADA regulations specifically define a population of customers who are entitled to this service as a civil right. The regulations also define minimum service characteristics that must be met for this service to be considered equivalent to the fixed-route service it is intended to complement. In general, ADA complementary paratransit service must be provided within 3/4 of a mile of a bus route or rail station, at the same hours and days, for no more than twice the regular fixed route fare.

In Marin, paratransit service provides pre-scheduled bus transportation for persons with disabilities who cannot independently use regular Marin Transit or Golden Gate Transit bus service some or all of the time. With this service, riders who cannot access our regular fixed routes can still maintain their freedom to travel around Marin. Paratransit service is available during the same days and hours as our local bus service, within 3/4 mile of the routes. We offer a shared ride, door-to-door service as well as subscriptions for passengers who make regular trips to the same destination.

## **What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush. The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services. Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin -- and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 -- the ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities. To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered.

## **BASICS OF THE PROPOSAL**

### **What is the purpose of the proposal?**

The purpose of the proposal is to optimize public subsidy, achieve sustainable programs, ensure fares are equitable and maintain a safety net for low-income individuals, and create pricing that manages consumer demand for services.

### **Why is Marin Transit proposing this now?**

Staff have reviewed fares for both fixed route and Marin Access services since 2016. Analysis and recommendations have been included in both the Marin Access Strategic Analysis and Recommendations Report (2016) and the 2018 SRTP Fare Policy Recommendations. Additional review of fare usage and financial performance along with customer input through the 2018 Fare Payment Survey and annual Marin Access Passenger surveys led to a holistic evaluation of current fares and eligibility standards in 2019.

### **Where can I find more information on the proposal?**

Information on the proposal is conveniently located on the Marin Transit website at <https://marintransit.org/farepolicy2019>.

### **How can I make formal comments about the proposal?**

You can provide formal comments on the proposal in a variety of ways.

- » Via the Marin Transit website at <https://marintransit.org/farepolicy2019>. Use the "Share Your Comments" link to provide comments via our website.
- » By US Mail to, Marin Transit | 711 Grand Avenue, Suite 110, San Rafael, CA 94901.
- » By phone, to the Marin Access Travel Navigator team at 415.454.0902; press option 2.
- » By email, to [info@marintransit.org](mailto:info@marintransit.org).

### **Is this proposal designed to increase funding for Marin Transit?**

This proposal is designed to optimize public subsidy, achieve sustainable programs, ensure fares are equitable and maintain a safety net for low-income individuals, and create pricing that manages consumer demand for services. Financial projections indicate that the proposal is revenue neutral; increases in fares will be offset by the expansion of the Low-Income Fare Assistance program. Through this proposal, those that can pay for the services will and those that do not will be supported through the Low-Income Fare Assistance program.

### **What are the goals of this proposal?**

The goals of this proposal include:

- » Reassessing eligibility thresholds to achieve consistency and equity across all Marin Access and Marin Transit programs;
- » Reevaluating fare policies to optimize public subsidy, achieve sustainable programs, ensure fares are equitable and maintain a safety net for low-income individuals, and create pricing that manages consumer demand for services; and
- » Maximizing social equity by simplifying and updating fare assistance programs across the Marin Access suite of programs to further support income-qualified populations.

### **What are Marin Transit's guidelines for fare changes?**

Marin Transit's fares should:

- » Be simple to understand and implement;
- » Balance subsidy and fares to align with the level of service provided across various programs; and
- » Include systemwide changes in fare pricing and structure that:
  - Will lead to behavioral changes in fare payment to support operational efficiencies
  - Incentivize ridership on more cost-effective services.

### **What is the timeline of the proposal?**

Marin Transit staff have developed this proposal based on previous analysis and recommendations since early 2019. A final proposal was presented to the Marin Transit Board of Directors on November 18, 2019. A public hearing will be held in January 13, 2020. Staff will request formal adoption from the board on February 3, 2020. If the full proposal is adopted by the Board of Directors, the changes detailed in the proposal would be implemented and effective on July 1, 2020.

## **FIXED ROUTE FARE CHANGES**

### **What is the cost of riding Marin Transit fixed route buses?**

Cash fare for Marin Transit fixed route service is \$2; youth (age 5 – 18), seniors (age 65+), and those with disabilities receive a 50% discount (fare is \$1). Adults using Clipper pay a reduced fare of \$1.80; fare for youth, seniors, and those with disabilities is \$1 with Clipper.

Riders can also purchase period passes. The adult fare period passes is: for 1-day (\$5), 7-day (\$20), and 31-day (\$80); youth, seniors, and those with disabilities receive a 50% discount.

### **What is the Clipper card?**

The Clipper card is a regional fare payment card that allows a user to pay for their fare on Marin Transit local service, regional bus and ferry service on GGBHTD (Golden Gate Transit), the SMART train and other regional services such as BART and AC Transit.

### **Why isn't the fixed route fare changing?**

The proposed fare policy has not pursued major changes to fixed route fares, Clipper pricing, and youth fares. The reasons for this include:

- » Marin Transit fixed route fares are integrated with GGBHTD fares through the Clipper system, limiting Marin Transit's ability to change fares independently. Additionally, work on Clipper 2.0 is in progress. Staff expects to achieve independence with the introduction of Clipper 2.0.
- » Regionally there are fare coordination and integration efforts led by MTC and SPUR.

Staff expects to reevaluate fare policies for fixed route fares, Clipper pricing, and youth fares following Phase II of the proposed fare policy change.

### **How do Marin Transit fares compare to other transit agency fares?**

Marin Transit fares are comparable to peer agency fares in the Bay Area.

### **Why is Marin Transit eliminating the 7-day pass?**

Staff have recommended elimination of the 7-day pass due low usage and in preparation for Clipper 2.0, at which time Marin Transit will not have the ability to offer a 7-day pass to Clipper users.

### **Why is Marin Transit reducing the cost of the 30-Day pass?**

Staff have recommended reducing the cost of the 30-day pass to encourage a shift away from the use of cash and encourage use of Marin Transit fixed route service.

## **DEMAND RESPONSE FARE CHANGES**

### **When were Marin Transit fares last changed?**

Marin Transit has not increased fixed route or paratransit fares since 2004.

### **How do Marin Transit demand response fares compare to other transit agency demand response fares?**

Marin Transit's Paratransit fare is the 2nd lowest among peer agencies in the Bay Area.

### **Why is the fare for demand response (Catch-A-Ride, Dial-A-Ride, and paratransit) services changing?**

The fare for demand response services is changing due to:

1. Declining fare box revenue for demand response programs and increases to operating costs
    - » In FY18, the subsidy per passenger trip for demand response services was \$40.05. This means that for every \$2 in fare collected, Marin Transit expended \$40.05. Fare revenues in Demand Response programs do not keep pace with growing operations cost or meet cost performance targets; the target subsidy for demand response programs is \$35 / passenger trip.
    - » In FY18, demand response services experienced a continuing decline in farebox recovery, at a rate of 4.4%. Farebox Recovery is the fraction of operating expenses which are met by the fares paid by passengers.
  2. Premium services such as Catch-A-Ride and Dial-A-Ride fares don't reflect the premium features offered
- Note that:
- » Among peer agencies in the Bay Area, Marin Transit's ADA Paratransit fare is the 2nd lowest, and monthly passes are one of the highest in price
  - » Marin Transit has not increased its fixed route and paratransit fares since 2004
  - » ADA regulations permit fares for mandated ADA trips to be as high as double the regular fixed route fare

### **Is Marin Transit allowed to increase the fares for demand response (Catch-A-Ride, Dial-A-Ride, and paratransit) services?**

ADA regulations permit fares for mandated ADA trips to be as high as double the regular fixed route fare. Non-mandated services such as Catch-A-Ride and Dial-A-Ride are not governed by any regulations related to fare policy.

### **Does the paratransit fare change also change the fare for intercounty trips?**

The fares for intercounty paratransit trips are set by Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District. This fare change applies to local trips only (within Marin County). More information about intercounty fares can be found here: <http://goldengatetransit.org/fareprograms/#Paratransit>.

### **Why is the fare change happening in two phases?**

Marin Transit recognizes the impact a fare increase could have on demand response riders; to ease the burden, the increase will occur over two phases. Additional changes including standardized eligibility criteria for Marin Access programs and an expanded Low-Income Fare Assistance program are designed to ease the burden of a fare increase and ensure that those with limited incomes do not experience a decline in their mobility or ability to travel in Marin County.

## **LOW-INCOME FARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

### **How does the existing Low-Income Fare Assistance (LIFA) program work?**

The existing program is fragmented. Catch-A-Ride clients receive an additional subsidy based on self-reported income that is determined by the Elder Economic Index for Marin County; paratransit clients that demonstrate that they are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) receive ticket booklets for 20 1-way trips on a quarterly basis.

### **How will I be able to document that I am eligible for Medi-Cal?**

During the application process you will provide your full name and date of birth to the Travel Navigators. The Travel Navigator team will use this information to coordinate with the County of Marin to confirm your Medi-Cal eligibility. In the event we are unable to confirm your eligibility, you may be asked to provide documentation that demonstrates your eligibility.

### **I don't qualify for Medi-Cal, can I still qualify for the new Low-Income Fare Assistance Program?**

Yes, applicants that are not Medi-Cal eligible can qualify by providing documentation indicating that their annual income is below the thresholds of the Elder Economic Index. See the table below for more detail.

Source data: <http://www.basiceconomicsecurity.org/EI/location.aspx>

<b>Household</b>	<b>Single Elder</b>			<b>Elder Couple</b>		
	Housing Status	Owner w/o Mortgage	Owner w/ Mortgage	Renter, one bedroom	Owner w/o Mortgage	Owner w/ Mortgage
Annual Income	\$22,272	\$45,408	\$33,276	\$32,712	\$55,848	\$43,716

### **What documentation will I need to provide to demonstrate my income?**

To demonstrate your income you can provide one of the following:

- » Most recent 3 paystubs
- » Most recent 3 financial assistance documents
- » Most recent tax return

### **Why does Marin Access need my income information?**

Your income information is used to determine whether you are eligible for the LIFA program if you are not eligible for Medi-Cal.

### **What other discounted fare programs does Marin Transit offer?**

Marin Transit offers riders that are age 65+ a 50% discount on all general public services.

## MARIN ACCESS ELIGIBILITY

### **Why is the age-related standard for Catch-A-Ride and the volunteer driver reimbursement programs (STAR & TRIP) changing?**

Staff are recommending consolidating eligibility criteria for Catch-A-Ride and volunteer driver reimbursement programs to improve the legibility of the programs for clients, increase the number of eligible riders, and encourage older adults to learn about programs at early stages of aging.

### **I'm a current Catch-A-Ride / STAR / TRIP client, does this mean that I can't use these services anymore?**

No, all existing clients will be grandfathered into the programs and will still be able to use these programs. We encourage you to confirm whether you are eligible for all of the Marin Access programs at least two weeks in advance of the implementation date (July 1, 2020) if you're under the age of 65.

### **I am concerned that people under the age of 65 will no longer be eligible for Marin Access programs. How many people will be "left out" with this change?**

Staff reviewed American Community Survey (ACS) data and current Marin Access client demographic data. Per 2017 ACS data, 8% of Marin County residents are age 60 - 64, while 20% are 65+. As of September 2019, 5% of Marin Access clients were between the ages of 60 - 64.

## MARIN TRANSIT FIXED ROUTE PASS

### **Marin Access eligible riders can opt in to receiving a free fixed route pass. Does this pass apply to Golden Gate Transit routes?**

No.



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learn  
more**



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