

Executive Summary

An up-to-date Short Range Transit Plan (S RTP) guides Marin Transit’s investments in the future. It is a living document that uses current information, financial resources, and performance targets to plan for local public transit services. The S RTP balances Marin Transit’s projected costs and revenues over a five-year timeframe, and is designed to provide a ten-year vision of the future.

In 2004, Marin County voters approved a 20-year ½ cent transportation sales tax increase (Measure A) that designates 55 percent of revenues to local transit services and established goals, objectives, and performance measures. Marin voters approved the 2018 Marin County Transportation Sales Tax Renewal Expenditure Plan (Measure AA) that extends the ½-cent transportation sales tax through 2039.

Dedicated local funding enables the District to pay for and improve local bus and shuttle services and provide targeted mobility programs for Marin senior, disabled, and low-income residents. The District depends on the availability of local funding sources to secure federal, state, and regional funding for public transit operations, equipment, and facilities. Scheduled Marin Transit services encompass all bus routes that begin and end within Marin County, supplemental middle and high school trippers, community shuttles, West Marin Stagecoach, and Muir Woods Shuttle. Marin Transit provides demand response paratransit services for those eligible under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and additional mobility management programs to expand travel options and serve seniors who no longer drive. In all cases, Marin Transit anticipates the needs of Marin County’s diverse travel markets and delivers cost-effective, targeted service options. Marin Transit is a future-oriented mobility manager.

Marin Transit Services and Programs

With approval of Measure A, the District developed the county’s first local transit service plan as part of the 2006 Short Range Transit Plan. The local service plan was designed to enable local riders to travel more efficiently to reach work, school, and health care destinations with fewer transfers. Marin Transit has continued to refine the route structure to anticipate and serve the needs of local riders, improve service efficiency, and establish a system to evaluate performance by service type.

The District’s bus and shuttle services carry over 3.2 million passenger trips each year, and are organized by program and service type. The five program areas are: local fixed route, community shuttle, supplemental school, rural fixed route, and the Muir Woods Shuttle. Service type refers to the purpose of individual routes and their intended markets. Marin Transit develops and delivers a family of services to accommodate the diverse transportation needs of Marin residents.

Marin Transit contracts out all its operations in five program areas – Big Bus, Community Shuttle, Rural and Seasonal, Special Needs, and Yellow Bus. Marin Transit initiated an innovative mobility management program, Marin Access, in 2008 to develop and deliver efficient travel options and improve information for senior and disabled residents. Since 2009, the District operates the award-winning seasonal Muir Woods Shuttle that keeps vehicles off narrow mountain roads, relieves congestion, and improves the experience of visitors from across the United States and around the world. This is accomplished through an ongoing partnership with the National Park Service.

Marin Transit works with many schools in Marin County to offer and manage supplemental transit and yellow bus services for students. These school service trips reduce roadway congestion during peak travel hours. The District offers a reduced-price Youth Pass for riders 18 and under that provides unlimited rides on all local transit services within Marin County. Free Youth Passes are provided to students of eligible families with demonstrated income hardships.

Under the umbrella of Marin Access, Marin Transit has a variety of programs that serve the transportation needs of older adults and those with disabilities. A team of Travel Navigators coordinate and match four mobility programs with eligible riders. These include local paratransit, travel training, volunteer driver, and subsidized taxi (Catch-A-Ride). The travel navigators provide trip planning and technical assistance so that riders can select the most appropriate option to make their trips. Delivery of Marin Access services is supported by the Measure A local transportation sales tax and the Measure B vehicle license fee. Measure B designates funds specifically to expand and enhance transportation services for senior and disabled residents.

Who Does Marin Transit Serve?

The table below is presented in Chapter 1 and compares the results of passenger surveys conducted on Marin Transit services in 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2017 with recent data on the demographics of Marin County residents.

The comparison highlights significant differences in transit riders from the average Marin County resident in income and race. Compared to the rest of the County, Marin Transit local riders have a significantly lower income level and a lower proportion of riders identify themselves as Caucasian/White. About 35 percent of Marin Transit local riders earn less than \$25,000 a year, while the majority of Marin County residents (63 percent) are at the other end of the range earning \$75,000 or more.

In addition to an overview of the District's services, partner agencies, and capital assets, Chapter 1 summarizes the findings from local transit needs and countywide market assessments. The findings identify the characteristics of those who are likely to use local transit services in the future. The recommendations from each of these studies significantly inform the SRTP service planning priorities.

Category	Transit Rider (Onboard Survey Results)				Marin County % ⁽¹⁾
	2005	2008	2012	2017 ⁽²⁾	
Age					
Persons under 18 years old	18%	25%	21%	11%	20%
Persons between 18 and 65 years old	78%	70%	72%	80%	60%
Persons 65 years old and older	4%	5%	7%	9%	20%
Gender					
Female	48%	46%	49%	44%	51%
Male	52%	54%	51%	56%	49%
Household Income					
Under \$25,000	51%	61%	57%	35%	12%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	28%	18%	20%	24%	13%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	10%	8%	7%	12%	12%
\$75,000 or more	10%	13%	16%	29%	63%
Race					
Hispanic	n/a	49%	43%	52%	16%
Caucasian/White	n/a	36%	39%	29%	72%
African American	n/a	9%	7%	7%	2%
Asian	n/a	8%	5%	5%	6%
Other	n/a	5%	6%	7%	4%

Source: (1) U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–2017 American Community Survey, (2) 2017 onboard survey did not include Supplemental school routes that were included in previous survey efforts.

Service Types and Productivity

Marin Transit has developed and applied categories of service by program and function. This system provides a means to establish performance standards and better design services in various parts of the county based on the profile of the travel market served and ridership levels. Chapter 1 provides a description of how the District defines these service types and the transit vehicles assigned to them.

Marin Transit Priorities and Performance Measurements

The Measure AA expenditure plan calls for Marin Transit to update this Short Range Transit Plan every two years so that the District will more effectively respond to the changing transit needs of all who travel within the county. The expenditure plan distributes transit funds within four categories:

- Maintain and expand local bus transit service
- Maintain and improve the rural bus transit system
- Maintain and expand transit service and program for those with special needs
- Invest in bus transit facilities for a clean and efficient transit system

As required in Measure AA, the transit planning process employs extensive public input from all areas of the county and bases investments on an analysis of measurable performance criteria. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission also compels transit operators to prepare an SRTP every four years, and this SRTP update addresses their requirements. Through Marin Transit's short-range planning process, the District has established a system for evaluating the performance of its services and programs that refers to and builds on the eight criteria established in the Measure AA plan. The District organizes these measures into four categories to evaluate the performance of its services and programs as follows:

1) Systemwide Performance:

- a. Relieves congestion and provides mobility as measured in total ridership;
- b. Ensures high levels of customer satisfaction with services;
- c. Provides accessible and reliable transit services with Marin County;
- d. Ensures services are provided in a reliable manner;
- e. Provides service levels to prevent overcrowding;
- f. Promotes environmental justice based on demographic analysis; and
- g. Meets cost efficiency standards based on cost per revenue hour.

2) Corridor-Level Performance

- a. Provides adequate service frequency in priority transit corridors;
- b. Provides adequate span of service in priority transit corridors; and
- c. Provides competitive travel times to promote transit usage.

3) Route-Level Performance:

- a. Meets service typology productivity standards based on passengers per hour;
- b. Meets service typology cost effectiveness standards based on subsidy per passenger trip; and
- c. Establish funding agreements for Partnership services.

4) District Performance:

- a. Attracts outside funding sources, including federal and state revenue, as well as discretionary grants and other local funds;
- b. Operates the system in a manner that encourages public involvement and participation; and
- c. Maintains a capital plan to minimize air quality issues and provide quality amenities and vehicles

Chapter 2 of the SRTP provides detail on each Marin Transit goal and performance target. The District develops a monthly systemwide report, a quarterly route performance report, and an annual summary report that summarize operational and financial performance for the Board of Directors. These reports are available for viewing on the website: www.marintransit.org

Service Plan Goals within the Short Range Transit Plan

The District is planning for very little growth in the District's fixed route services (+1%) and a relatively significant amount of growth (+19%) in the demand response programs that primarily serve older adults and persons with disabilities. The ten-year plan projects that operational expenses will outpace revenues in year three, District finances will remain stable over the ten years and support current and planned service levels.

This service plan recognizes a number of challenges and opportunities. These include:

- Lack of permanent operations and maintenance facilities;
- Attracting and retaining labor, including drivers and maintenance staff;
- Supporting transportation for special needs populations; and
- Defining transit’s priority within the county’s transportation hierarchy.

To respond to these challenges, Marin Transit has:

- Benefited from an extension to the local transportation sales tax (Measure A/AA) for an additional 30 years;
- Continued to diversify the District's planning and operations to better match service levels to demand;
- Controlled costs through competitive bidding;
- Leveraged regional transit expansion activities;
- Provided congestion relief through student transportation services, and
- Evaluated potential private sector partnerships to increase and expand mobility.

Additional opportunities will be recognized with improvements in regional transit, student transportation, and other alternative transportation options within the County. Further description of these challenges and opportunities as well as detailed funded and unfunded projects are included in Chapter 3 and Appendix C of the Plan.

Marin Transit Capital and Financial Plans

Delivering safe and cost-effective transit service requires adequate numbers of well-maintained vehicles, bus stops, and other supportive capital facilities and equipment. The capital plan addresses clean-fueled and electric vehicles, bus stop amenities and accessibility, major transfer locations, passenger information, and communications. The District has established a program of expenditures that identifies sufficient funding sources and the expected timeframe for each project. The capital plan also describes needed capital projects that will require additional funds - as unfunded capital needs.

The SRTP provides a ten-year plan for local and rural bus and shuttle routes and Marin Access programs based on projections of annual service hours and miles for each service category.

Marin Transit is currently in a strong financial position with a fully funded operations reserve, equivalent to six months of operations expenses. For operations, costs include contract services by program, fuel and communications, and customer service. Marin Transit draws from a variety of sources to pay for these services. These include local Measure AA and Measure B transportation funds, state gas tax funding under SB1, state transit assistance and transit development funds, federal grants for rural and lifeline services, and fares.

Appendix B of the SRTP evaluates the District’s fare policy structure, and is proposing updates current fare policy jointly with changes to Marin Access eligibility thresholds and low-income fare assistance program. These recommendations are included in the fare revenue projections.

The SRTP financial plan maintains the Marin Transit Board-adopted District reserve levels throughout the ten years. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the updated short-range capital and financial plans in detail.

Where is Local Transit Going in the Future?

This SRTP service plan is the basis for the ten-year financial and capital planning. The plan identifies delivery challenges and opportunities, and aligns them to financial projections to estimate the state of local transit in Marin County over the ten-year period. While currently in good financial health, the District is not forecasting significant growth until future financial and operating uncertainties are better defined.

The District also recognizes that mobility services are in the midst of radical changes and transit needs to respond to these changes. New technologies will reshape the transportation sector, and offer additional options for travel and car-free lifestyles. However, these technologies may not serve the general public in areas where public transit currently succeeds, particularly in terms of congestion relief and providing transportation for highly transit-dependent populations.

There are opportunities for public transit to be part of the solution alongside private and non-profit partners. Staff participates in ongoing discussions with these sectors to understand and identify opportunities for successful partnerships that can leverage technology and policy changes to improve local transit offerings and serve the mobility needs of all Marin residents. For example, Marin Transit anticipates that there will be a partnership to support on-demand mobility within the first year of the Plan.

To achieve the goals laid out in this plan, Marin Transit will focus on these initiatives:

Increase Efficiency of Operations

The District strives to create cost-neutral service expansion through increasing efficiency. Staff reassess route schedules and their alignments with current peak/off peak runtimes, and restructure routes that have excess time when the bus is out of service. Newly purchased scheduling software enables the District to closely assess current and proposed bus and shuttle schedules.

Plan for the Expanding Need for Marin Access Programs and Services

Marin County's older adult population is projected to increase by 25 percent over the next ten years. Marin Access programs provided almost 160,000 passenger trips in fiscal year 2017-18, and the number will increase in proportion with the numbers of residents reaching age 65 and above. Individualized transit services are by their nature expensive to provide, and the most expensive is door-to-door paratransit utilized by most Marin Access customers. The District will continue to plan for the expansion of these services while implementing or enhancing programs and policies intended to contain costs. The SRTP accommodates and manages future growth related to senior and Americans with Disabilities Act-eligible riders and evaluates current service options, usage, and funding. Priorities include:

- Maximize the use of electronic scheduling software to increase service and efficiency;
- Provide more robust paratransit service to area outside the ADA-mandated geographic service area;
- Develop a more robust, accessible same-day service;
- Evaluate fare policies and eligibility criteria for Marin Access programs;
- Pursue effective partnerships to test and support innovative modes and services;
- Establish a wider audience for services; and
- Support new and expanded volunteer driver programs within the county.

Marin Transit anticipates a 19 percent increase in ridership over the next ten years on current Marin Access services as Marin’s senior population continues to grow. As demand for these services grows, the District must allocate a higher percentage of its budget to support these programs.

Evaluate Unfunded Service Needs

The SRTP Appendix C lists future service improvements as needs that are not funded within the Plan. These have been developed through analysis of:

- Input from riders (Bus Passenger Advisory Committee, comment cards, driver feedback, etc.);
- Input from Stakeholders (Partner agencies, local cities and towns, etc.);
- Current and previous planning studies;
- Changes in transportation market conditions; and
- Changes in demographics

Funded or unfunded, Marin Transit evaluates each service need based on the Measure AA performance criteria for transit investments. Appendix C includes the results of this evaluation for improvements that will require additional and financially sustainable funding to operate.