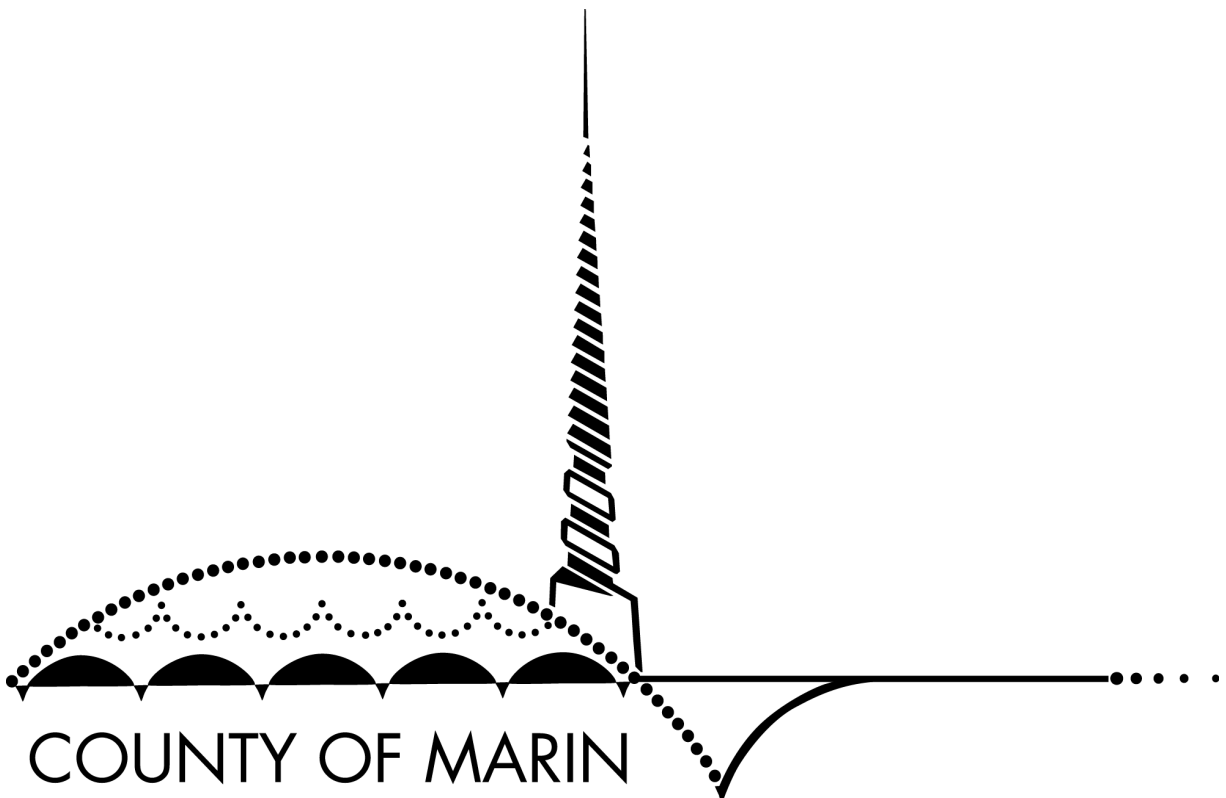
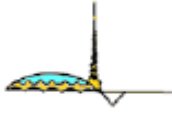

2012/2013 MARIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

Senior Transportation: On the Road Again

Report Date -April 19, 2013
Public Release Date - April 24, 2013





SENIOR TRANSPORTATION: On the Road Again

SUMMARY

As the Baby Boomer generation ages, the proportion of seniors within the total population is growing at a rapid pace. This growth puts a serious strain on the resources available for senior services. Especially affected by this demographic surge are transportation services. Is Marin prepared to accommodate the greater number of older adults who have either stopped driving or limited their driving? The answer is a resounding “maybe.”

The Grand Jury convened focus groups around the county to examine the transportation needs of Marin seniors. The purpose was to assess those needs, to determine whether they have been satisfactorily met, and to recommend appropriate action if they were not. Focus group participants indicated that, with the exception of schedule delays and underserved areas, the paratransit¹ needs of physically challenged older citizens have been adequately met. They stressed, however, that: 1) Whistlestop, the main paratransit provider, must reduce the time passengers spend waiting to be picked up, and 2) West and Northwest Marin, as well as East San Rafael, need paratransit service.

The Grand Jury also found that existing conventional transportation options for active seniors are inadequate. Non-driving but able-bodied seniors whom we interviewed concerned about social isolation and a loss of independence, noted the lack of available services for shopping, visiting, attending civic events and so on. Many who had voluntarily limited their driving would consider using public transportation if bus stops were more accessible and schedules more convenient. Steps are needed to provide viable and suitable transit alternatives for this group.

Most seniors we interviewed were unaware of the broad range of senior transportation options available in the county. Marin Transit’s Catch-A-Ride, a subsidized taxi voucher program, is an option that we found to be especially unfamiliar to seniors we interviewed.

The Grand Jury recommends that:

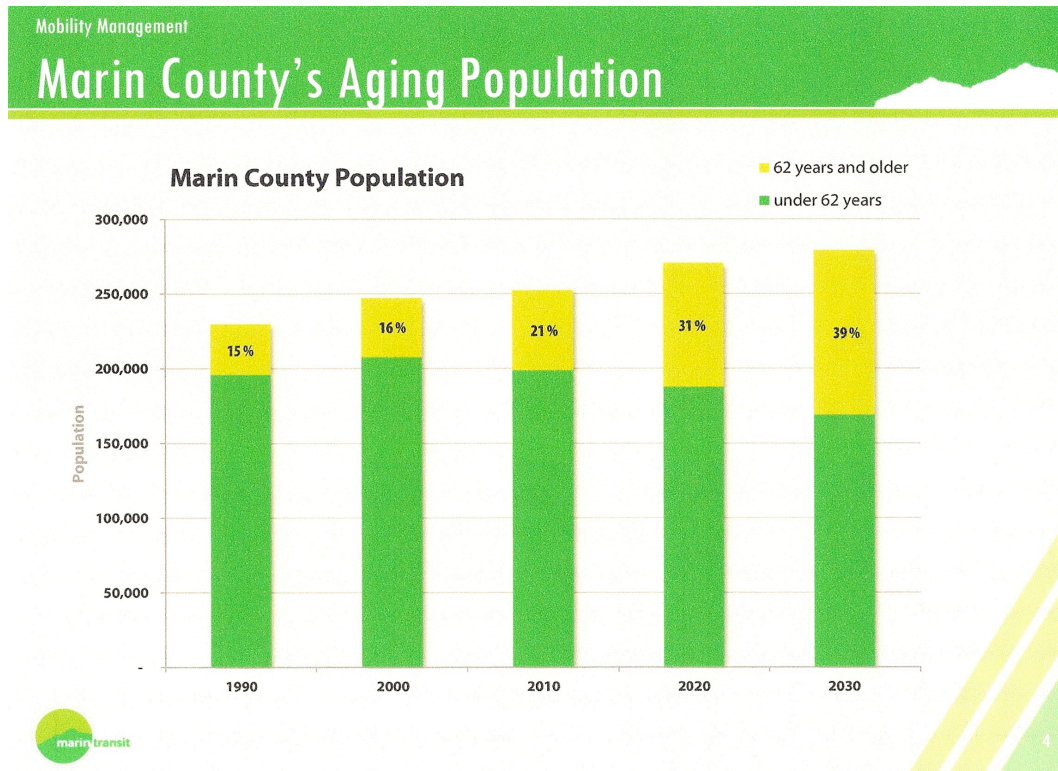
- Marin Transit and the Transit Authority of Marin forge collaborative private-sector partnerships under which shopping malls, supermarkets, hospitals and clinics would provide senior shuttles for shopping, grocery purchases and medical appointments.

¹ Specialized door-to-door service for people with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route public transportation.

- Marin Transit and the Transit Authority of Marin provide fixed-route or on-call Marin Transit vans to transport able-bodied seniors living in the County's distant hillside neighborhoods to the nearest bus stop.
- Marin Transit and Whistlestop extend paratransit service to outlying areas of San Rafael and expand that service to presently un-served areas of West and Northwest Marin.
- Whistlestop accommodate frail seniors by reducing the time they must spend waiting for the arrival of Whistlestop buses.
- Marin Transit augment outreach methods to seniors to include oral presentations, announcements and videos not only at traditional senior centers and retirement homes but also at venues such as shopping malls, adult education program sites, farmers' markets, and recreational facilities.
- Marin Transit ease the application process for Marin Transit's subsidized Catch-A-Ride taxi service by providing blank, hard-copy application forms rather than requiring elderly non-computer users to download an application or to call Marin Transit to request one. Lower Catch-A-Ride's age requirement to 75 from 80 for healthy non-driving seniors.
- Marin Transit reduce Catch-A-Ride's advance reservation time to allow for last minute and emergency trips. Continue to increase the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis as the Catch-A-Ride's taxi program expands.
- Marin Transit extend Novato's Dial-A-Ride model to other areas of Marin.
- Marin County's Department of Aging and Adult Services initiate a collaborative effort, such as the creation of a central database, among the patchwork quilt of community volunteer-driver programs.

BACKGROUND

Today, Marin is home to around 252,000 people. More than 42,000 residents, or 17% of the population, are over 65. Over the next 20 years, the most significant county population change will be an increase in the number of those 65 and older; the most dramatic change will be the sharp increase of those over 80. This accelerated growth in the number of elders poses a demographic challenge to Marin's senior transportation providers to offer appropriate alternatives to the personal automobile for those seniors who no longer drive or for those who continue to drive albeit under more limited conditions.

EXHIBIT 1 excerpted from Marin Transit's Mobility and Management Report**MARIN COUNTY AGE AND POPULATION PROJECTION**

The lack of alternative transportation options is often reported as the primary reason for a senior's reluctance to give up or reduce driving in this car-dependent county. Public transportation is not easily accessible for those living at a distance from the Highway 101 corridor. Many seniors who continue to drive can no longer drive safely. Many no longer drive at night.

Without convenient and safe travel options, seniors may face an isolated and diminished quality of life. Moreover, those who have reduced or stopped driving make fewer trips than their driving counterparts to see doctors and dentists, visit friends and family, and participate less in the civic and cultural life of the community.

More accessible and available transportation choices will provide a wealth of benefits to Marin's growing senior population. County transportation officials should enrich alternatives not only for those elderly with special needs but also for those healthy non-driving seniors who lack access to transportation. With such alternatives, isolated seniors would be able to remain participating members of their community and thus preserve a sense of dignity and independence. A reduction in the safety risk posed by older drivers to themselves as well as to others is another major benefit of expanding senior

transportation options to include alternatives to the personal automobile. Research has shown that older drivers are disproportionately involved in traffic accidents.² Many types of driving errors, such as failure to check blind spots or intersection collisions, increase with age. Collision rates per mile also increase.³

EXHIBIT 2 Source: California Highway Patrol, Information Services Section

OLDER MARIN DRIVERS INVOLVED IN COLLISIONS, 2010-2011

Year	Age Group	Drivers in Collisions	Drivers at Fault
2010	65-69	81	41
	70-74	44	22
	75-79	36	20
	80-84	32	25
	85-89	8	6
	90+	4	3
	Not Stated	34	21
2011	65-69	92	43
	70-74	50	26
	75-79	36	20
	80-84	27	19
	85-89	12	10
	90+	8	5
	Not Stated	46	33
Total		510	294

The advantages of improved senior transportation accrue not only to older adults but also to the larger community. Seniors benefit by preserving a sense of social connectedness and autonomy. The county benefits from reduced traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, from safer traffic conditions on local roads and highways, as well as from the continued contribution of seniors to community life.

² “Risky Drivers.” Consumer Reports. October 2012.

³ “DWO: driving while older.” University of California Wellness Letter. Vol. 29. Issue 1. October, 2012.

This Grand Jury study focused on the paratransit and conventional transit needs of older adults to determine whether both of those needs are met by the county's present transportation system, and if not, to recommend appropriate improvements.

APPROACH

Focus groups encourage more extensive, in-depth responses than those obtained through less-interactive surveys. For this report, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury convened nine informal focus groups throughout the county to hear directly from older residents about their driving and alternate transportation needs. In order to represent those residing in diverse areas of Marin, focus group meetings were held in a variety of geographic locations. A total of 108 seniors participated. Community centers, senior centers as well as adult education groups were chosen as appropriate venues. The meeting durations ranged from 40 minutes to over an hour. A representative of each facility made the arrangements and was always present. (Appendix A indicates each focus group's location, date, venue and number in attendance.)

Description

The nine focus groups were predominantly female. The age range was late 60s to early 90s, with the majority in the mid-70s to mid-80s. All groups had at least one male in attendance. All participants were retired. Most were widowed. Each group had at least two members who still drive. Participants arrived by personal automobile, carpool, public bus, Whistlestop, caregiver, retirement home shuttle or senior center shuttle. Translators were provided at the two Pickleweed focus groups. All meetings took place before a weekly lunch, bingo game, or club meeting and ended when those activities began. The groups were limited to those present and willing to participate.

Focus Group Questions

- Are you satisfied with your current transportation choices? If not, what additional options or services would you like to have?
- For those who drive, have you limited your driving in any way? What alternatives would encourage you to use other forms of transportation?
- For those who don't drive, what alternative means of transportation do you use? How can present services be improved?

To further strengthen an understanding of senior transportation needs, the Grand Jury also extensively researched websites devoted to senior transportation, exchanged e-mails and/or conducted phone and face-to-face interviews with transportation providers, contacted community merchants, and met with West Marin community citizens.

DISCUSSION

Several themes repeatedly emerged from the focus groups:

- The need for convenient, available and accessible conventional transportation to a variety of locations was identified most frequently. Seniors clearly expressed that these needs are not adequately met by existing transportation options and urged the development of new alternatives. For example, the availability of transit services to shop for groceries and consumer items, to visit friends and to attend cultural and civic events would alleviate concerns about social isolation and a loss of independence. Seniors also emphasized a need for expanded weekend service to enable greater access to social and entertainment venues.
- Many healthy seniors who still drive would consider the use of public transportation for their social/cultural/shopping/entertainment needs if it were more easily accessible, available and less time consuming. Hillside residents and those living in other secluded areas of the county highlighted the need for transportation to the nearest public bus stop. Reduced waiting times, expanded service areas and more frequent bus service would encourage greater bus use.
- There was a widespread unfamiliarity with, and misconceptions about, other transportation services. With the exception of those living in retirement homes, most focus group participants were not acquainted with services other than Whistlestop, but were eager to learn about such additional options. While transit information in the form of brochures distributed in libraries, medical offices, senior centers, community centers and other venues frequented by seniors may be readily available, this information has not been brought directly and immediately to their attention.
- Those few seniors aware of other transportation options such as Marin Transit's new Catch-A-Ride subsidized taxi program did not know whom to contact or how to apply for an application. Some expressed concern about the availability of a sufficient number of wheel-chair accessible taxis, about the program's age requirement, the limited number of monthly rides, and the cost of the vouchers. Non-English speakers were particularly concerned about the language barrier to access transportation services.
- The older adults for whom Whistlestop was the primary transportation provider repeatedly cited the undue length of time spent in transit and the waiting time to be picked up. They stressed the need to extend or increase paratransit service to East San Rafael, as well as to West and Northwest Marin. The addition of expanded weekend and evening service to allow for last minute unforeseen appointments was also a desired option.

- The majority of those who still drive had no plans regarding other transportation options if/when they had to stop driving other than relying on family members. They did not want to depend on friends, neighbors or volunteers for fear of becoming a burden. Many of these, however, have changed their driving habits as they aged. Some changes included eliminating nighttime driving, driving only short distances on familiar routes, limiting driving to non-rush hours, and avoiding the freeway whenever possible.

Marin Senior Transportation Options

- Marin Transit—the county’s primary transportation agency, is responsible for local public transit, and contracts with other providers for services to operate local bus and paratransit services. In addition to its local routes in East Marin, Marin Transit operates Novato’s Dial-A-Ride program and provides limited service to West Marin.

Novato Dial-A-Ride—on-call shuttle for all Novato citizens, is designed to fill gaps in the city’s local transportation system by providing trips within the city or connecting to fixed route transit for travel outside Novato. Provides curb-to-curb service. Advance reservations required. The service is available M-F 7:30 am to 11:30 am and 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm; 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday and Sunday. Marin Transit’s regular fares for seniors and persons with disabilities apply.

Muir Woods Shuttle—seasonal service between Sausalito and Muir Woods from May to October on weekends, Memorial Day and Labor Day. The fare for an annual Senior Pass is \$20.

West Marin Stagecoach—service to and from the West Marin towns of Inverness, Inverness Park, Pt. Reyes, Olema, Lagunitas, Forest Knolls, San Geronimo, Woodacre, Fairfax and San Anselmo. Free transfers to Marin Transit and Golden Gate transit routes within the county are included. Service to Northwest Marin towns is not provided. \$1 fare for seniors and persons with disabilities.

- Marin Access—Mobility Management Center that coordinates Marin’s transportation resources for seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income residents. It is a one-stop call center sponsored by Marin Transit, operated by Whistlestop and funded in part by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s New Freedom Program, State Measure A, and local Measure B. (see details under “Funding.”)

Catch-A-Ride taxi program—funded under Measure B approved in November 2010 and financed by approximately \$300,000 in annual vehicle registration fees. The program subsidizes 8 one-way taxi rides a month for those 80 years and over, and for eligible 60-79 year-old Marin residents who certifiably cannot drive. A one-way voucher of \$14 or \$18, depending on income, is provided. Marin Transit has purchased and leased four wheelchair-accessible taxis to participating taxi companies.

Whistlestop Wheels—on-call paratransit door-to-door service for persons with disabilities who are unable to use public fixed-route transit such as Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit. An eligibility application is required. Operates 365 days/year from 5:00 am to 1:00 am. Reservations accepted 1-7 days in advance, 7 days per week, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The service is mandated by The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) to follow public bus line routes but may deviate $\frac{3}{4}$ mile upon request.

Novato Health Express—transports Novato seniors to medical appointments within Novato and is subsidized by Novato Community Hospital.

- Volunteer Driver Programs—personal vehicles used to provide transportation to seniors primarily for medical appointments and errands:

Marin Access—supported by Marin Transit and operated by Whistlestop, sponsors two volunteer driver programs:

Safe Transport And Reimbursement program (STAR) provides volunteer transportation reimbursement for seniors in East Marin who are over 60, frail and disabled, or under 60 and eligible under the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Participants identify members of their community who have agreed to provide door-to-door transportation; the STAR program then reimburses the driver at \$0.35 per mile, with a monthly limit of 100 miles. The program does not provide a pool of volunteer drivers.

TripTrans, similar to the STAR program, provides transportation support for seniors and ADA-eligible riders in West Marin. Drivers also receive mileage reimbursement of \$0.35 per mile with a monthly limit of 300 miles. The program is funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's New Freedom Program and administered by West Marin Senior Services.

Faith-Based Programs—many churches and synagogues have small volunteer driver programs for their members.

Community Non-Profit Programs—a range of social service agencies provides volunteer drivers to particular user groups:

Jewish Family and Children's Services (JF&CS) provides eligible seniors and persons with disabilities, transportation to medical and dental appointments and for other errands.

American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery volunteer-based transportation program assists ambulatory patients to and from cancer treatment. Requires 7-10 day advance notice. Preferred treatment times between 9:30 am and 2:30 pm, Monday-Friday.

Project Independence's Hawkeyes provides same day surgery transportation for ambulatory patients.

Blind and Vision Impaired of Marin (BVIM) provides transportation only for vision impaired seniors.

- Senior Centers/Community Centers—may provide rides to/from a center as well as occasional bus trips to places of interest.

Marin City—Margaret C. Johnson Senior Center

Mill Valley—Mill Valley Community Center

Novato—Margaret Todd Senior Center

Tam Valley—Tam Valley Community Center

San Rafael—San Rafael Senior Center, Pickleweed Community Center, Osher Jewish Community Center

- Some Other Sources of Transportation provided for a fee:

Marin Villages—membership-based non-profit community organizations or local “villages” formed throughout the nation to help seniors age in place. Members volunteer to provide occasional transportation assistance to each other. In December 2012, Marin Villages received a \$30,205 GAP grant from Marin Transit to expand their volunteer driver programs. Annual membership fees are \$365 for individuals and \$450 for households.

SilverRide—a private San Francisco-based company that offers driver-escorted senior transportation. Ride prices are quoted in advance.

Overview of Best Senior Transportation Options in Several Other Areas

- Paratransit: According to the ADA, transit districts must provide accessible services for people with disabilities who cannot use public transit due to either a physical or cognitive condition. ADA paratransit services operate along the same roads as public fixed route buses, with permissible deviations of $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. The law also requires that ADA service expand as needed to accommodate demand from eligible people. Some cities and counties provide for their own local paratransit programs in addition to the ADA program that operates in each jurisdiction. For example:

City of Alameda provides a locally funded, free Paratransit Shuttle for Alameda seniors 55 and older and for individuals with disabilities, in addition to the ADA program.

Santa Clara County's OUTREACH program provides door-to-door public paratransit services in cars and wheelchair accessible vans to those meeting eligibility requirements. Cost is \$3.50 per ride. No restrictions on what the rides may be used for but priority is given for rides to health care appointments, senior centers, and congregant meal programs.

San Mateo County's Redi-wheels program provides door-to-door public paratransit services to county seniors unable to take public transportation.

- Community Shuttles: Many areas have introduced local shuttles that serve limited areas (e.g., city limits, or a specific radius) or for limited purposes (e.g., medical appointments, shopping, or senior center visits).

Bayshore/Brisbane Senior Shuttle operates a free, open eligibility on-demand service that connects to the Bayshore Caltrain Station, with stops along the way.

Foster City Senior Express Shuttle provides on-demand service for residents over 50. The \$2 fare for local trips and \$5 fare for trips outside Foster City includes a pick-up at the residence.

Rohnert Park Sunshine Bus provides 9-12 noon mini-bus transit for seniors in Rohnert Park, Cotati, Penngrove and Santa Rosa for medical appointments, shopping or personal needs. The roundtrip cost for Rohnert Park appointments is \$7; the roundtrip cost for Santa Rosa is \$10.

- Dial-A-Ride Program: Provides a curb-to-curb, on-demand transit option. It is not a taxi service but shared ride public transportation. Riders are generally assigned shuttles according to their destination.

Healdsburg offers a door-to-door weekday service available to the general public with priority given to seniors 60 and over and the disabled. Seniors pay a one-way fare of \$0.75.

Merced County offers Dial-A-Ride services primarily for those 60 and over and for the disabled who are unable to use public transportation. It is also available to the general public if space permits.

City of Oceanside contracts with a private company to offer door-to-door van service for \$5 per one-way trip. Riders are recommended to make separate reservations for return trips.

- Group Transportation/Charter Rides

Denver's SeniorRide transports groups of ten or more seniors to a variety of cultural, educational and entertainment events. Seniors 65 and over pay a discounted rate of \$2.25 for a local round-trip and \$5 for a regional round-trip.

- Medical Transportation: Provides service to and/or from medical appointments

City of Alameda Medical Return Trip Improvement Plan (MRTIP) provides free taxi rides to East Bay Paratransit service-certified residents to return home from medical appointments.

- Taxi Scrip Programs: Unlike Marin's Catch-A-Ride service, these typically offer discounted coupons or "scrip" for taxi fares. An eligible person buys scrip from an agency at a discounted rate and then arranges a ride directly with the taxi

company. The scrip is used in place of money to pay for or supplement the price of a taxi ride from a participating taxi company. The program is federally and locally subsidized through the Transportation and Development Act (TDA). (See “Funding” section.)

City of Alameda Premium Taxi Service provides 50 percent discounts off taxi rides for eligible residents.

Merced County provides taxi scrip for Atwater/Winton residents 65 and over as well as for those who are ADA eligible. A maximum of three booklets per month, each containing 40 \$1 scrip coupons, may be purchased for \$8 per booklet. This is an 80% discount.

City of Oceanside offers seniors \$20 taxi vouchers for \$7; intended for trips anywhere within North County. This is a 65% discount.

Funding

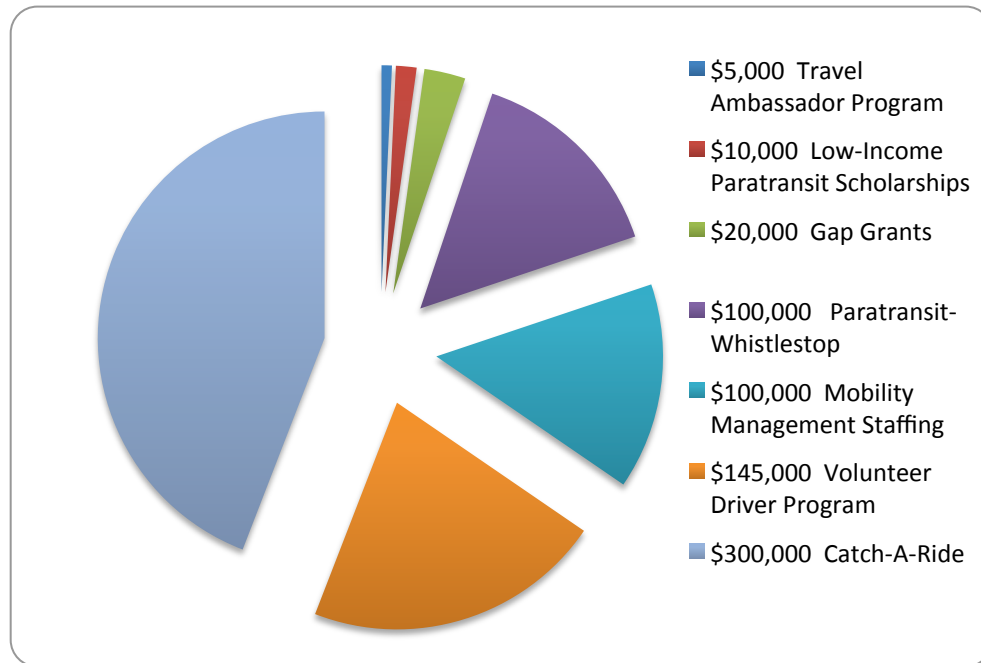
How does the county currently finance senior transportation programs? The primary sources are:

- In 2004, Marin voters approved Measure A, a 20-year ½ cent transportation sales tax. The expenditure plan apportions 9% of total Measure A funds to maintain and expand transit services and programs for seniors, persons with disabilities, youth and low-income residents. Marin Transit received \$1,550,728 in the last fiscal year. These funds were used to support Marin Transit’s Paratransit and Mobility Management Programs. The total cost of these programs in the last fiscal year was \$5,471,802.⁴
- In 2010, Marin voters approved Measure B, a \$10 vehicle registration fee to be spent in perpetuity on local transportation needs. 35% of the revenue is allocated for the improvement and expansion of transit services for seniors and people with disabilities. During the first two years of funding, the total annual available funds were not all expended. Therefore, they will carry over to fund program growth in future years. The fund’s allocation was:
 1. Paratransit-Whistlestop (15%--\$100,000)
 2. Catch-A-Ride (44%--\$300,000)
 3. Gap Grants (3%--\$20,000)
 4. Low-Income Paratransit Scholarships (1%--\$10,000)
 5. Mobility Management Staffing (15%--\$100,000)
 6. Volunteer Driver Program (21%--\$145,000)
 7. Travel Ambassador Program (5%--\$5,000)

⁴ Source of information found in the expenditure plan of the Transportation Authority of Marin

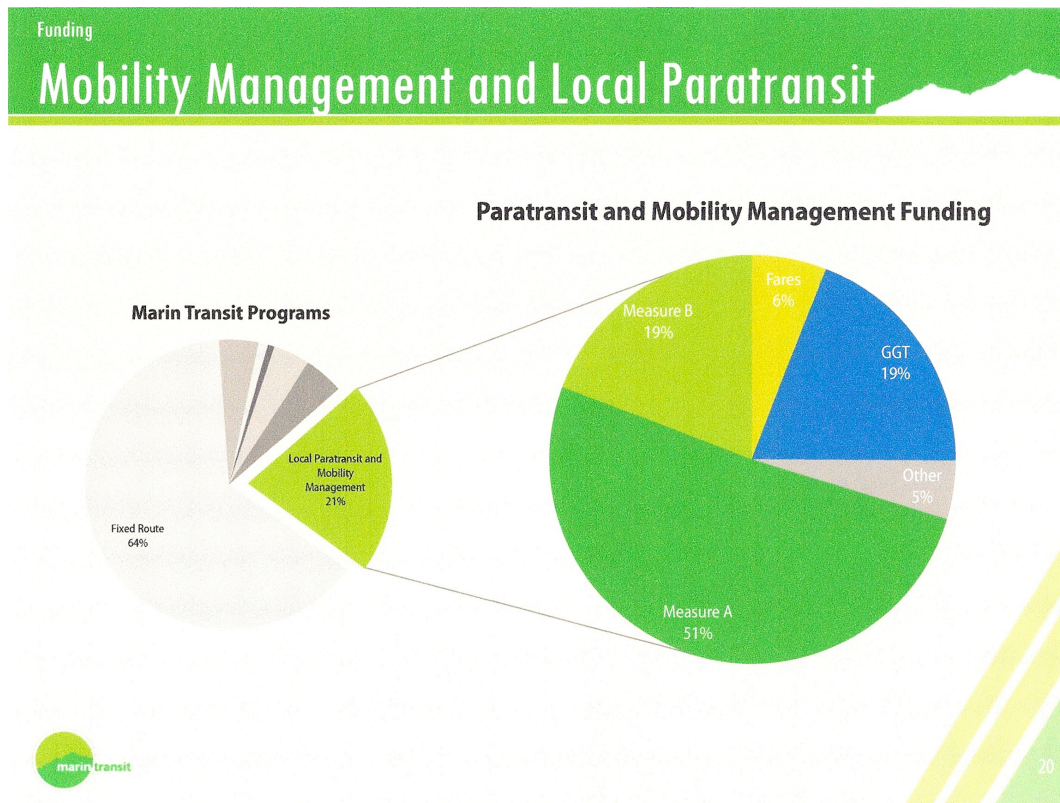
(Note: Total is greater than 100% due to rounding)

ALLOCATION OF MEASURE B FUNDS



- In 1972, California voters approved the Transportation Development Act (TDA) that provides two major sources of funding for public transportation: the State Transit Assistance fund (STA) and the Local Transportation Fund (LTF). These funds are for the development and support of public transportation needs and are allocated to areas of each county based on population, taxable sales and transit performance. In the last fiscal year, Marin Transit received \$83,881 in STA funds dedicated to paratransit.
- A federal grant from the New Freedom Fund supports new, accessible transportation programs and facilities to overcome barriers facing Americans with disabilities. Currently, Marin Transit has two New Freedom grants. One is a \$167,000 grant for the development of a regional mobility management guide, and for mobility management and staff time. The other is a \$143,000 grant to expand the Catch-A-Ride taxi voucher program.

Since funding sources are not sufficient to cover the cost of paratransit and mobility management programs, the difference is made up by Marin County property tax revenue.



What are some potential sources of funding for senior transportation programs?

- Non-profit foundations, such as the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) and the Buck Trust are possible sources of grants. The MCF, for example, funds programs for successful aging that include transportation services.
- The use of creative financing to form mutually beneficial private/public partnerships by encouraging corporations, merchants, hospitals and medical clinics, businesses and other commercial entities to contribute funds for senior shuttles to their establishments. For example, Northgate shopping center might underwrite shuttles to enable senior shoppers to travel to the mall, medical groups could support shuttles for senior patients and supermarkets could fund grocery-shopping shuttles. At least one shopping center manager has already indicated interest in exploring a collaborative relationship with the county if presented with a detailed plan.
- Require building proposals for the construction or expansion of large retail developments to include a package of public benefits that would include funding for senior transportation.⁵

⁵ See Sheyner, Gennady. "Busy intersection could get road work, building." *Palo Alto Online*. February 11, 2013. www.paloaltoonline.com/news/show_story

FINDINGS

The Grand Jury found that paratransit transportation for seniors with special needs is perceived as adequate with the exception of two areas requiring improvement: 1) the length of time spent in transit as well as the delays in waiting to be picked up by Whistlestop, and 2) the lack of service to East San Rafael, and West and Northwest Marin. In contrast, conventional transportation to serve the social needs of non-driving healthy seniors was deemed inadequate.

On the basis of focus group responses, the Grand Jury has concluded the following:

Paratransit and Medical Transportation

- F1. The time spent waiting to be picked up and dropped off by Whistlestop transit is unnecessarily lengthy and fatiguing for frail seniors. Consequently, a trip to the doctor can needlessly consume an entire day.
- F2. The lack of Whistlestop service to East San Rafael, as well as to West and Northwest Marin lessens the ability of seniors in those areas to remain independent and healthy.
- F3. The perceived shortage of viable alternatives to Whistlestop service for medical and dental appointments affects the health of seniors by curtailing their access to health care.
- F4. There is an overreliance on a patchwork quilt of volunteer driver programs. Private vehicles are not always wheelchair accessible, the burden of finding a driver rests on the elderly passenger and, as Marin's population ages, the pool of volunteers may shrink as volunteers themselves age into passengers.

Impact on Quality of Life

- F5. Lack of weekend shuttle service impairs the ability of seniors to maintain their independence as well as their ability to access medical care in emergencies.
- F6. Difficulty in shopping for groceries and providing adequately for their nutritional needs adversely affect the health of seniors.
- F7. Obstacles to the purchase of basic consumer goods have a negative impact on the ability of seniors to maintain their quality of life.

Access to Public Transportation

- F8. Marin Transit or Whistlestop vans should be made available to transport healthy seniors living on central and southern Marin's secluded hillsides to the closest public transit stops.

- F9. Senior residents of Marin City's housing projects should have improved access to the Marin City transit hub.
- F10. Senior residents living east of the Montecito Shopping Center (areas of Loch Lomond and Peacock Gap) need greater access to public transportation.
- F11. Senior residents living in Novato east of Highway 101 (Bel Marin Keys, Bahia and Black Point) need greater access to public transportation.
- F12. West Marin seniors, including those in Northwest Marin should have additional transit options within West and Northwest Marin towns and between those areas and the rest of the county.

Information and Outreach

- F13. Despite the outreach efforts of transit providers to inform seniors about transportation options, a general lack of knowledge about the range of transportation alternatives continues to remain and therefore, impacts the ability of seniors to preserve their independence.

Catch-A-Ride Taxi Subsidy Program

- F14. The application process to enroll in the Catch-A-Ride taxi program is too difficult and complicated for that large subset of elderly seniors who either don't own computers or are not computer literate.
- F15. The application process to enroll in the Catch-A-Ride taxi program is too difficult for many non-English speaking seniors who hesitate to call for information and/or an application because of a language barrier. Moreover, the Marin Access website does not offer translations from English. Marin Transit's website does not consistently provide translations. For example, the Paratransit Riders Guide is available only in English.
- F16. The Catch-A-Ride program's age requirement of 80 years for healthy seniors excludes many who are neither frail nor disabled but who would also benefit from their program.
- F17. The Catch-A-Ride program's advance registration time excludes those who have last minute appointments or medical emergencies.
- F18. The Catch-A-Ride's \$14/\$18 voucher for a one-way trip places an undue financial constraint on the distance some seniors might travel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends that:

Paratransit and Medical Transportation

- R1. Whistlestop Wheels reduce the time spent waiting for Whistlestop service by using more reliable and accommodating scheduling.
- R2. Marin Transit and Whistlestop Wheels initiate local paratransit service to East San Rafael and to West and Northwest Marin.
- R3. Marin Transit and the Transit Authority of Marin (TAM) support additional medical appointment shuttles by partnering with Marin General and Greenbrae-area medical clinics.
- R4. Marin County's Department of Aging and Adult Services initiate a collaborative effort, such as the creation of a central database, among the patchwork quilt of community volunteer driver programs. Attempts should also be made to involve bilingual volunteers.

Quality of Life Issues

- R5. Marin Transit and TAM provide vans to support a weekend shuttle service transporting seniors to social, cultural and entertainment functions.
- R6. Marin Transit and TAM partner with area supermarkets to provide neighborhood shopping shuttles.
- R7. Marin Transit and TAM collaborate with Northgate shopping center, Town Center, the Village and other large shopping malls to provide senior shopping shuttles.

Access to Public Transportation

- R8. Marin Transit and TAM supply fixed-route or on-call vans to transport seniors living in central and southern Marin's isolated hillside neighborhoods to the nearest bus stop or transit hub.
- R9. Marin Transit and TAM provide fixed-route or on-call vans to enable seniors living in Marin City's housing projects to travel to Sausalito and connect to other parts of the county.
- R10. Marin Transit and TAM furnish fixed-route or on-call vans to enable West Marin and Northwest Marin seniors, to connect more easily to transit hubs in Fairfax, central San Rafael, and Petaluma.
- R11.** Marin Transit extend Novato's Dial-A-Ride model to other areas of Marin in addition to the Tiburon route currently under consideration.

Information and Outreach

- R12. Marin Transit publicize senior transit information, including Catch-A-Ride taxi brochures and the list of senior transportation options listed in this Grand Jury report, in a variety of locations in addition to retirement homes and traditional senior centers. Other venues might include shopping centers, adult education classes, recreational facilities and farmers' markets.
- R13. Marin Transit, when appropriate, publicize senior transit information in a variety of modes to include oral presentations, announcements, and videos. Information must be brought immediately and directly to the attention of seniors. Heed may not always be given to printed brochures, flyers, announcements, or notices in seniors newsletters, unless the information is specifically brought to their attention.
- R14. Marin Transit translate all transit information, whether in print, on the website, or available by phone, into Spanish and other languages. As the non-English speaking population continues to increase, so does the number of older immigrants in need of transportation services. Outreach efforts need to be diversified to connect with this growing population.
- R15. Marin Transit supply more complete senior transportation information on the website of the Division of Aging and Adult Services instead of referring seniors to the Marin Access telephone number. Include the "Marin Senior Transportation Options" section of this Grand Jury report.

Catch-A-Ride Taxi Program

- R16. Marin Transit simplify the application process for the Catch-A-Ride taxi program by including an application form, both in Spanish and other languages, with each brochure rather than requiring seniors to either download an application or to call Marin Transit to request one.
- R17. Marin Transit lower Catch-A-Ride's age requirement to 75 to accommodate healthy non-driving seniors.
- R18. Marin Transit reduce Catch-A-Ride's advance scheduling time to allow for last-minute trips and emergency appointments.
- R19. Marin Transit continue to increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxis as the Catch-A-Ride program expands.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following individuals:

- Community Mobility Manager, Marin Transit: R12-R14, R16-19.

- General Manager of Transportation Services, Whistlestop: F1, F2, R1, R2.
- Director of Aging and Adult Services, Marin County Division of Health and Human Services: R4, R15

From the following governing bodies:

- Board of Directors, Marin Transit: F3, F5-F12, R2, R3, R5-R11
- Board of Directors, Transportation Authority of Marin: R3, R5-R10

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act. (GJ Text)

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Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUPS

LOCATION	DATE	VENUE	NUMBER IN ATTENDANCE
Novato	Nov. 19, 2012	Margaret Todd Senior Center	7
Kentfield	Nov. 20, 2012	College of Marin, Emeritus College	8
Mill Valley	Nov. 27, 2012	Mill Valley Community Center	8
San Rafael	Dec. 5, 2012	San Rafael Senior Center	15
San Rafael	Dec. 10, 2012	Osher Jewish Community Center	15
Marin City	Dec. 12, 2012	Marguerita C. Johnson Senior Center	16
Ignacio	Dec. 13, 2012	College of Marin, Emeritus College	12
San Rafael	Feb. 22, 2012	Pickleweed Community Center, Spanish speaking group	12
San Rafael	Mar. 1, 2013	Pickleweed Community Center, Vietnamese speaking group	15
TOTAL			108