

One Less Car on the Road this April – #RideWithDamon

I'm happy to share that for the month of April I will be relying **ENTIRELY** on public transit, biking and the occasional carpooling/ride-bumming to get around Marin County and the Bay Area. I'm dedicating this month to the goal of taking **ZERO** single-occupancy-vehicle trips –no excuses!



Our Marin public transit system is both vital and underutilized.

The County invests significant resources in local transit, and many talented professionals dedicate themselves to making the system operate efficiently and reliably for users. We encourage and expect people to use these systems to take cars off the road, relieving traffic and working towards our climate goal of reduced greenhouse emissions.

As an elected representative charged with overseeing this system, first-hand knowledge is critical –but that knowledge can often be lacking. How are we expected to represent our constituents and their needs when making decisions about services if we don't understand the service itself? What is working, and what is not? What elements are particularly valuable and merit further investment, and are there other aspects that can be improved? What problems need to be addressed?

In preparation for my month without driving, this week I took the Marin Transit Route 259 shuttle from my home to the Civic Center. It was a smooth 20 minute ride and also educational in that I heard conversations about how new service changes are going. This is the sort of insight that I'm hoping to gain along with first-hand user experience.

On that note, I'd like to extend an invitation for you to participate in the **#RideWithDamon** challenge. I want you to test out how the transit system could work for you, and hear your feedback. There are lots of ways to take this initiative, and I will be treating one lucky participant and guests to a lunch at a special location:

- Dedicate one week –or even one working week –to taking zero single-rider car trips by relying on public transit, walking, biking, or carpooling
- Identify ONE bus route that you can use in your routine using the Marin Transit trip planner tool: <http://www.marintransit.org/>
- Provide some constructive feedback to Marin Transit service based on your experience as a rider through social media

Simply take a photo of your experience –the route sign, the bus, the driver, your bike route –and post it to Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag **#RideWithDamon**. We will be reviewing the entries all month for useful feedback, and will be conducting a drawing at the end of the month for a winner. I hope you'll join me in investigating how local transit can work for you, and in posting about your experiences to spread the word and provide feedback to the system.

Too often public systems are administered from afar. While my staff is more than concerned about the status of my appointments and my calendar, (and if you see me at an off-site meeting I may be asking for a ride back), I'm excited to get a close-up working knowledge of our public transit system and bike infrastructure this April. I hope to see some of you on the bus or the bike path!

Damon

