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REPORT | Marin Transportation

An update on the process to improve transportation for Marin residents

May 2004

Details of Plan to Improve Marin Transportation Are Approved

Last month the Transportation Authority of Marin, with representatives from every city in Marin and every county supervisor district, approved a plan that spells out how it would spend $331 million on transportation improvements over the next 20 years. The money will be available if two-thirds of Marin's voters approve a half-cent transportation sales tax on the November 2 ballot.

The Board of Supervisors will decide later this year whether to place a transportation sales tax measure on the November ballot. Before the decision can be made, the Authority needed to adopt the final version of a Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan; this occurred May 6.

The plan is the product of four years of public input and participation by thousands of Marin residents. It has a single goal: "To improve transportation for all Marin County residents and workers by providing a variety of high quality transportation options designed to meet local needs."

To reach that goal, there are four strategies funded by the Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan:

1. Develop a local bus system that serves community needs including special transit for seniors.
2. Ensure timely completion of the Highway 101 Carpool Lane Gap Closure Project through San Rafael despite the loss of State funding.
3. Maintain and improve Marin's local transportation infrastructure, including roads, bikeways and sidewalks.
4. Improve safe school access and reduce school-related congestion.

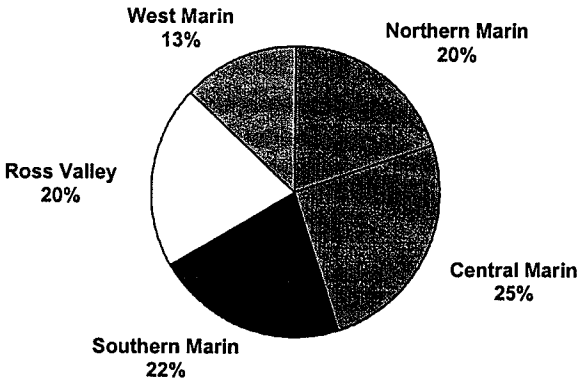
The sales tax would cost the typical Marin resident about $80 per year.

Plan Updated in Response to Cities' Concerns

A draft of the expenditure plan was presented to each City/Town Council and numerous citizens' groups in March and April for further review and comment. Input and concerns expressed at these meetings resulted in several refinements to the plan. Here are some examples of the changes:

- To ensure geographic equity, half of the infrastructure maintenance and improvement funds will be allocated among the county's five planning regions according to a formula based on population and road miles. (see chart ▸). The other half will be allocated directly to cities to meet their own infrastructure needs.
- Understandable, measurable criteria were added to decide how to spend transit dollars and which major roads to focus maintenance and enhancement. Some examples of transit criteria include passengers per mile, passengers per hour, connectivity, or meeting a unique need such as service for the disabled. Some examples for roads include traffic count, pavement index, accident history, and school access.
- Cross-bridge bus routes into San Francisco will be considered using the same measurable criteria described above.

Road Improvement Fund Allocation



Transportation Authority Created

The Marin County Congestion Management Agency became the Transportation Authority of Marin following approval in April by the majority of the city/town councils. The Authority has the power to authorize and implement the sales tax, including issuing bonds and other financial mechanisms, to implement transportation improvements sooner. The Authority consists of the Board of Supervisors and representatives of each city/town in Marin.

The 16-member Authority will create a Citizens Oversight Committee to review transportation sales tax actions by the Authority will report directly to the public each year. The Committee will be comprised of 12 non-government citizens reflecting Marin's diversity, appointed by the Authority with the assistance of the League of Women Voters.

Poll Finds Support for Sales Tax Expenditure Plan

A survey of Marin County registered voters found solid support for the half-cent transportation sales tax. The survey of 1,000 Marin residents likely to vote in the November 2 election, conducted in mid-March by Godbe Research, found 69% either "definitely" or "probably" would vote for a transportation sales tax if it were on the ballot, while 26% would probably or definitely vote "no" and 5% were undecided. The survey has a margin of error of 3%. Among the poll's findings:

- 68% of residents said they were likely to support the tax plan if it improves bus service within Marin County. Support grew to 71% for specialized transit for seniors and the disabled.
- 71% were likely to support the plan if it maintains and improves local roads.
- 71% were likely to support the plan if it includes the timely completion of the Highway 101 carpool lane through San Rafael.
- 74% were likely to support the plan if it creates safe pathways for students going to school.

In the survey, traffic-related issues were Marin residents' main concerns. Of those surveyed, 76% cited "reducing traffic congestion on Highway 101" as very important, the highest of any issue.

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Next Steps

The Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan is being presented to each City/Town Council for approval.

These meetings are open to the public, and all residents are welcome to comment on the plan. Check the website www.marintraffic.org, or contact your City/Town Council for the date and time of their meeting to consider the plan.

If the plan is approved by a majority of the county's City/Town Councils representing a majority of the population, the Authoritymust decide by August 6 to place it on the November 2 ballot.

Complete details of the plan are available at **www.marintraffic.org.**

Comments

Please use this space if you have questions or comments about the Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan:

Send by mail to:
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Or email to: **info@marintraffic.org**