



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/23/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Public Infrastructure

Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz, 707-565-2550

Vote Requirement: Informational Only

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Marin-Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service (MASCOTS) Plan

Recommended Action:

Receive information on the Marin Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service (MASCOTS) Plan.

Executive Summary:

The SMART commuter rail system began operations in 2017 offering new regional public transit service between Sonoma and Marin Counties. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns beginning in early 2020 resulted in steep transit ridership declines and significantly changed commute patterns. These events provided an opportunity to reassess how transit service is provided along the Highway 101 corridor in the North Bay.

In 2023 the Marin Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service (MASCOTS) group was established. The MASCOTS group includes Golden Gate Transit, Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), Marin Transit, Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus, Petaluma Transit, Sonoma County Transportation and Climate Authorities, Transportation Authority of Marin, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The MASCOTS Plan is being conducted under the guidelines of Regional Network Management and the Blue-Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force that was established by MTC during the pandemic to further collaboration between the region's public transit operators.

Discussion:

The MASCOTS group hired Nelson/Nygaard to analyze public transit performance and travel patterns along the Highway 101 corridor in Sonoma and Marin Counties. The analysis found that 70% of bus, ferry, and bridge travel between Sonoma and Marin Counties and San Francisco has an origin or destination from and to San Rafael and south. Also, for travel between Sonoma and Marin Counties, the analysis determined that three-quarters of travel occurs within the SMART commute shed, defined as the area from which workers can reach SMART in 30 minutes or less. In addition, SMART has replaced Golden Gate Transit route 101 as the predominant passenger choice for regional transit trips between Sonoma and Marin Counties. With the goal of increasing transit ridership by increasing regional transit services in the North Bay, improving regional connections, and simplifying the transit network, the MASCOTS Plan is proposing the following high-level recommendations:

- Eliminate Golden Gate Transit route 101 north of Novato and increase frequency between San Rafael and San Francisco. Increase SMART frequency and span of service to ensure high quality transit is available between Sonoma and Marin Counties when route 101 is shortened.
- Streamline Golden Gate Transit and Marin Transit routes between San Rafael, Marin City, Sausalito, and San Francisco.
- Improve Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus, Petaluma Transit and Marin Transit to provide more direct connections to SMART.
- Simplify Golden Gate Transit commute routes between Sonoma County and San Francisco to provide one consolidated commute route 172 serving Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati and Petaluma.
- Realign Golden Gate Transit route 580 trips to operate along the freeway and improve travel times between East San Rafael and the East Bay.

Although Golden Gate Transit route 101 would no longer provide service between Sonoma and Marin Counties, it should be noted that the MASCOTS Plan call for preserving intercounty ADA paratransit trips. The MASCOTS Plan's recommendations for Sonoma County Transit would be service hour neutral in that the improved connections to SMART would not require additional resources or operating expenses. In March 2025, Sonoma County Transit revised route 20 serving the Lower Russian River and Forestville, Graton, and Sebastopol providing direct service to and from the SMART station in downtown Santa Rosa. Similar improvements are anticipated on route 30 connecting the Sonoma Valley area with Santa Rosa's downtown SMART station, and on local shuttle routes serving the Windsor and Rohnert Park SMART stations.

The MASCOTS Plan's proposed service changes would be implemented through a three-year pilot program beginning in Spring 2026. The MASCOTS plan is being presented to the respective boards of the partner agencies from June through September. A public engagement campaign was launched during July and August 2025, which included community pop-up events, virtual information sessions, and a public survey made available on the project's website MASCOTSplan.org. Evaluations on the effectiveness of the MASCOTS service changes are to be conducted during the second year of the pilot period. Any needed revisions to Sonoma County Transit's SMART connector improvements would be made during year three of the pilot period.

Next Steps

Golden Gate Transit conducted a public hearing regarding their proposed major service changes to routes in Sonoma County on August 21, 2025. Marin Transit will also be conducting a public hearing on October 7, 2025, regarding proposed major service changes in Marin County. These two agencies plan to finalize their respective service changes later in Fall 2025. Implementation of all proposed service changes in Sonoma and Marin Counties would take place in Spring 2026. Because the service changes proposed by Sonoma County Transit in the MASCOTS plan will be minor, a public hearing has not been scheduled.

Beginning in August 2025, Sonoma County Transit initiated an 18-month Comprehensive Operational Analysis titled the Transit Enhancement and Active Transportation Study. The objectives of the study are to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Sonoma County Transit's current transit services and infrastructure. It will

gather input from key stakeholders, including community members, governmental agencies, and partner organizations and will engage in collaborative regional transit planning and service enhancements. Recommendations for transit improvements, active transportation enhancements, and potential connections to regional transit will be presented in a final report and actionable implementation plan.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

Yes

The Sonoma County Transit projects recommended in the MASCOTS plan will be minor, including more direct bus connections to and from SMART's rail stations. Racial Equity Analysis will need to be initiated after Sonoma County Transit's specific bus connection projects are identified.

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There is no fiscal component to this board item.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

MASCOTS PowerPoint

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None.