

August 21, 2025



**PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO
GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT BUS ROUTES AS IDENTIFIED IN THE MARIN-SONOMA
COORDINATED TRANSIT SERVICE (MASCOTS) PLAN**

Thursday, August 21, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
Board Room, Administration Building,
Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza, San Francisco, CA

Background

The genesis of the proposed changes for Golden Gate Transit (GGT) bus service arises from the fact that travel patterns within the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's (District) service area have significantly changed in recent years.

The opening of Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) rail service in phases beginning in 2017, along with enhancements to local bus service by Marin Transit, began to shift longstanding ridership patterns for Golden Gate Transit (GGT) bus service. The COVID-19 pandemic hastened those changes and greatly diminished commute travel between the North Bay and San Francisco by all travel modes, including automobile, bus and ferry.

Renewed and heightened interest in regional collaboration among Bay Area public transit agencies emerged during the pandemic, as did the District's need for a new Strategic Plan that ensures the continued relevancy and financial viability of the District. The District's *Final Strategic Plan* was approved in May 2024 and includes initiatives that support both regional collaboration and right-sizing of the District's transit services.

The Marin-Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service (MASCOTS) Plan is the first subregional transit analysis conducted under Regional Network Management guidelines, which were established by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) during the pandemic in response to the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force's desire to further collaboration between transit operators and MTC.

MASCOTS is a cooperative and collaborative effort encompassing the District, SMART, Marin Transit, Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus, Petaluma Transit, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

These agencies committed to reviewing transit service in the Highway 101 Corridor as if all bus, rail, and ferry services were operated by one entity focused on efficiently growing overall transit ridership in the Corridor.

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Comprehensive travel data gathered by MTC for the Bay Area's Transit 2050+ long-range plan was harnessed to establish travel demand along the Highway 101 Golden Gate Corridor. MTC brought in a consultant, Nelson\Nygaard, to support this analysis.

The analysis determined that roughly 70% of all travel (Bridge, bus and ferry) across the Golden Gate Bridge to/from Marin and Sonoma Counties has an origin or destination from San Rafael south. Novato accounts for 17% of the travel market, and the remainder is associated with Sonoma County.

For travel between Marin and Sonoma Counties, the analysis determined that about 75% of travel occurs within the SMART commute shed. Lastly, about 75% of travel from Marin and Sonoma Counties to San Francisco is destined to the northeast quadrant of the city, primarily focused in the Downtown, Fisherman's Wharf, and Civic Center areas.

MASCOTS analyzed ridership data on a trip-by-trip basis for each route to determine where service was viable, where it was duplicative, and what strategies would improve performance. Areas with the highest ridership potential were identified, underperforming service was called out, and ways to decrease service duplication were recommended. While MASCOTS offers recommendations specific to other transit operators, only those relevant to GGT are covered by this public hearing.

GGT Route Proposals

The MASCOTS Plan proposes route and/or schedule changes to Routes 101, 130, 132, 172, 580, and 580X and the discontinuation of Routes 150, 164, and 172X. These changes would reallocate resources from service with low ridership to service with the highest ridership potential. Nearly all riders impacted by the proposal would have alternate service available. There would be no overall decrease in GGT annual service hours.

Route 101 would be truncated in Novato, with service between Marin and Sonoma Counties provided by significantly improved SMART rail service. Resources saved by truncation would be reinvested in Route 101 improvements between San Rafael and San Francisco, with service every 15 minutes during weekday peak periods and every 30 minutes at other times.

Routes 164 and 172X would be merged into Route 172, providing a single Commute route connecting Sonoma County with San Francisco every 20-30 minutes during peak periods. Route 172 would be shortened to start at the Santa Rosa Transit Mall. Additionally, the plan recommends that Route 172 no longer carry local passengers in San Francisco to improve travel times for regional riders travelling the furthest distances.

Route 150 would be discontinued, and Route 130 would be shortened to operate between Marin City and San Francisco. Resources saved by these changes would be reinvested in Route 130, which would operate every 30 minutes throughout the day. The plan also extends reinvestment to one additional morning trip on Route 132. Marin Transit would provide replacement service between San Rafael and Marin City on a single route, with service every 15 minutes offering timed connections with Route 130 in Marin City.

Route 580 would be realigned in East San Rafael to follow the existing Route 580X alignment, which operates non-stop between Bellam Boulevard and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. This faster service

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would allow all but three westbound morning trips on Route 580X to be converted to Route 580. Limited morning service on Route 580X would remain to bypass significant traffic congestion in Point Richmond.

The MASCOTS Plan assessed Routes 114 and 154 and Golden Gate Ferry but does not propose any changes to these services.

Public Comment Process

The District's *Rules of the Board* require that it hold a public hearing to obtain input from the public for major service changes. Public comments on this proposal may be submitted in several different ways:

1. Attend a meeting or hearing and comment directly;
2. E-mail publichearing@goldengate.org ; and/or,
3. Send written comments to the District Secretary.

The District's practice is to treat all comments equally without regard to the manner in which they are submitted or received. Therefore, individuals need not attend the public hearing and provide testimony in person if they have commented through email or written forms. All comments received through the above methods will be considered in the final recommendation. Comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 22, 2025.

Major Service Change Policy

The District's Major Service Change Policy defines "major service changes" as a reduction or increase of 25% or more in total vehicle revenue miles in service on any specific route, with the change(s) occurring at one time or over any twenty-four month period. Major service changes must be analyzed for impacts. The proposed changes to Routes 150, 164, and 172/172X will meet the 25% threshold. However, because alternate service will be available for riders on Routes 150, 164, and 172, no Title VI equity analysis is required under the District's Major Service Change Policy.

The proposed changes to Route 101, 130, 132, and 580/580X will not meet the 25% threshold. With respect to Route 101, the alignment change results in an 18.2% decrease in total vehicle revenue miles in service. Although not subject to the major service change analysis, staff recognizes that the proposed truncation of Route 101 in Novato is a significant change and further analyzed alternatives available to riders who currently use the GGT Route 101 service between Novato and Santa Rosa. Staff determined that the enhanced service on SMART between Novato and Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Transit Routes 10, 44, 48, and 48X, and Santa Rosa CityBus Route 10 offer alternative public transit service for most of these riders.

The major service change analysis will be included along with a final set of recommendations, which will be presented to the Board in September for a final decision regarding the potential elimination of or changes to these routes.

Public Notification

Outreach on the proposal was conducted in July and August. Public outreach activities included:

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- Creation of a project website (mascotsplan.org);
- Open houses in Marin City, the Canal Neighborhood of San Rafael, Petaluma, and Santa Rosa;
- Two informational sessions held online;
- Presentations at the Bus Passengers Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) meetings;
- Legal Notices published in the *Marin Independent Journal*, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, *Petaluma Argus Courier*, *La Voz* and *La Prensa*;
- Advertisements placed in *Marin Independent Journal* and *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* ;
- Posters, in English and Spanish, were placed on-board buses and in passenger waiting rooms at Piner & Industrial and San Rafael Transit Center;
- Direct outreach to passengers on affected routes;
- Press releases to local media;
- Social media postings on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter); and,
- Email blasts to customers and community-based organizations.

Translation of all printed materials and handouts in Spanish were available in accordance with the District's Language Implementation Plan (LIP).

Next Steps

Following the public hearing, staff will evaluate all comments received and determine whether changes or modifications need to be made to the proposal. A final recommendation will be brought to the Board of Directors at the Transportation Committee meeting on Thursday, September 25, and to the full Board on the following day. If approved by the Board on September 26, service changes would go into effect in spring 2026 when SMART and the other MASCOT participating agencies implement their associated changes.