

Canal Youth Bus Rider Survey 2008 Key Findings

In April & May 2008 the Marin County Youth Commission surveyed 97 youth bus riders, most of whom live in the Canal neighborhood or attend San Rafael or Madrone High Schools.

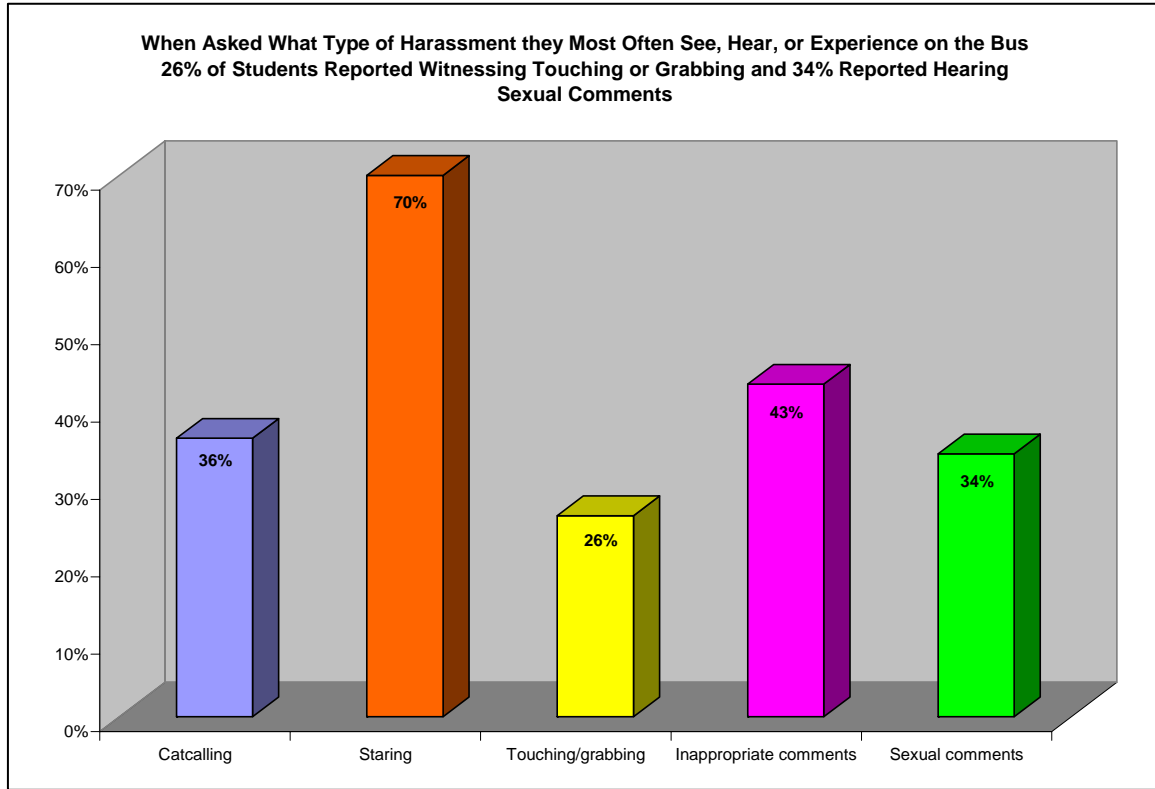
- 1) 67% of the students surveyed said they rode the bus almost everyday.
- 2) 56% of female daily riders said they experience sexual harassment on the bus.
- 3) 41% of females who regularly ride the bus said they experienced sexual harassment **once a week or almost everyday.**
- 4) 62% of youth reported seeing other students being sexually harassed on the bus
- 5) 53% of females who regularly ride the bus said they see or hear other youth being sexually harassed on the bus **once a week or almost everyday.**
- 6) 78% of all respondents said they would ride the bus more if it was cheaper.
- 7) 65% of daily bus riders said that the bus passes them by without picking them up almost everyday or at least once a week.
- 8) 64% of the students reported having to wait 20-30 minutes or more for the bus to pick them up.
- 9) 71% of daily bus riders marked that they only sometimes or never get a seat on the bus.
- 10) Only 43% of the students surveyed have a free Youth Pass sticker.

Recommendations:

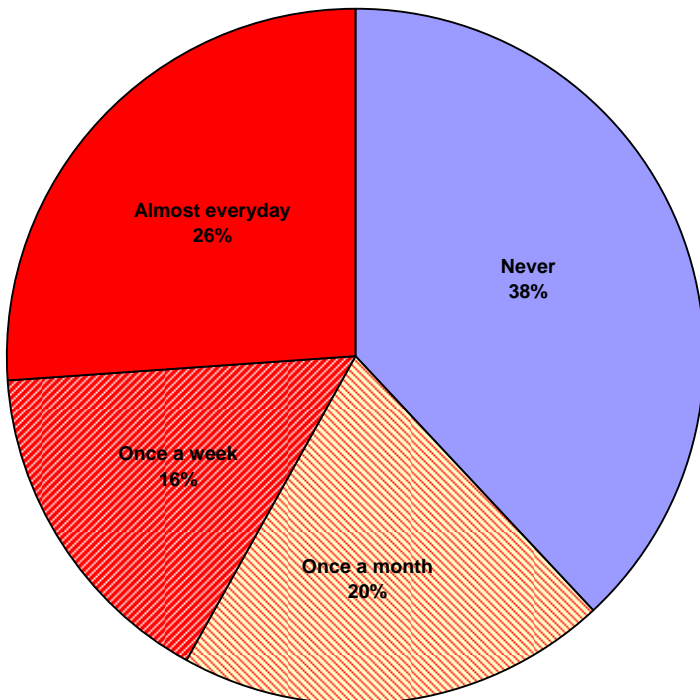
The Marin County Youth Commission recommends that the Marin Transit Board and Staff commit to use a portion of the \$1.3 million available for capital and service improvements to remedy the frequent sexual harassment and over-crowding faced by students traveling to and from the Canal neighborhood to San Rafael High School. Specific recommendations include:

- 1) Meet directly with youth in the Canal to create workable and acceptable solutions.
- 2) Create a Supplemental School Service Route or other Student Only route serving the Canal and San Rafael High School so that students can ride on a safe route without other adult passengers on board.
- 3) Increase frequency of busses in the morning from the Canal to San Rafael High to relieve over crowding (which is a contributing factor to sexual harassment) and to reduce "pass bys".
- 4) Fund a social norms campaign to display youth created anti-sexual harassment posters on busses and bus stops.

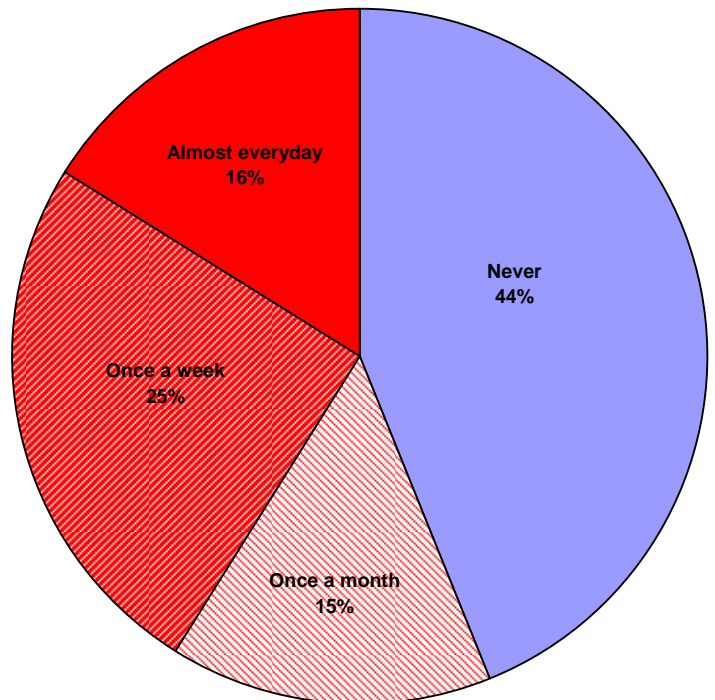
Canal Youth Bus Rider Survey 2008 Charts



62% of Youth See Other Students Being Sexually Harassed on the Bus



56% of Female Daily Riders Experience Sexual Harassment on the Bus



Canal Community Forum: Transit Issues in the Canal Meeting Notes and Next Steps Notes

Wednesday July 23rd 6:30-8:30pm, Pickleweed Community Center
Sponsored by: Canal Youth Concilio, Canal Concilio, Marin County
Youth Commission

Attendance: 15 youth and 15 parents/community members attended along with 3 representatives from Marin Transit
David Rzepinski, General Manager, Amy Van Doren, Transit Planning Manager, and Suzanne Chen-Harding, Sr. Transportation Planner, and two Golden Gate Transit staff Teri Mantony, Deputy General Manager, Bus Division and Ron Downing.

Students presented statistics from the Youth Transit survey conducted by the Marin County Youth Commission and then performed 3 skits to highlight the youth bus pass program, sexual harassment on the busses and overcrowding on the busses. The students then presented several recommendations including:

- A bus from Canal directly to San Rafael High School
- have a number to call for complaints - posted bilingually (eng/sp), and with bilingual attendants
- have comment cards on every bus, all the time, next to schedule brochures - so riders may comment on service issues immediately
- adjust bus schedule so that it better reflects usage (more frequent service in AM and afternoon, larger buses during peak hours)
- display fares more clearly - make sure that youth are aware of prices
- expand the income requirements for free bus pass sticker
- provide improved bus stops, especially in terms of bad weather
- address overcrowding and sexual harassment issues

Marin Transit and Golden Gate transit officials then responded to the recommendations and participated in a dialogue with questions and comments from the youth, parents and community members in attendance.
Below are a list of issues brought up and next steps agreed to by participants.

There was talk about bringing up issues of sexual harassment on the busses and what SRCS can do to possibly provide security/adults on the busses and maybe some education to students about what sexual harassment is and how/who to report it to. My understanding is that the school district is responsible for student safety on their way to school. Also parents wanted to talk to the school district about better publicizing the free bus pass stickers that available to low income students - several parents said the the information about these

passes was not included in back to school packets as promised by SRCS.

There are also approximately 60% of low income students who are eligible for the pass who have not signed up for one. Davidson MS (and MLK Academy) currently do not offer the free passes to the students apparently because they do not want to deal with the administrative hassle, even though many of their students would qualify and then could ride the bus anywhere, anytime within the county to get to after school activities, the mall, the MYC or where ever they need to go. The Canal youth and adult Concilios (Community Councils) are meeting with Mike Watenpaugh on August 28th, 6:30-8:30pm at Bahia Vista Elementary- it would be great if you could attend as well.

Below are some of my notes about things to follow up on or things that the Transit officials agreed to do:

- GGT and MT will investigate Making comment and suggestion forms available on the bus so you don't have to ask the driver for one. Have these in spanish.
- GGT and MT will investigate a way to display the bus fare clearly on the new fare boxes (possibly a slip in card?)
- GGT will look into Publicizing on the busses that spanish speakers are available if people call 257-4404, especially on the 35/36 route.
- GGT will talk to drivers about the forum and seek their advice on the best ways to deal with sexual harassment on the busses.
- Suggested to have posters telling people that they should notify driver if there is a problem. Question raised was, "What will the drivers do in this instance? Are drivers trained to handle sexual harassment complaints?"
- Canal community could publicize to students that if they take earlier busses they will be less crowded.
- MT will request from GGT that a longer bus be added to morning routes.
- Concilio could ask City of SR about bus stop improvements and the city using some of the county's \$200,000 designated for this.
- Display transfer fare prices on bus stops that are transfer points so people know if they have enough cash for the ride before they get on.
- Raising the income level for a free bus sticker for youth would have to be approved by the board of supervisors and would require additional funds.

- only 40% of eligible students at SRHS applied for the bus pass so MT needs help from parents and students to publicize. Info about the Youth Pass did not go out in the back to school packet to the parents who attended the forum.

- MT and GGT should put Youth Pass publicity posters on the 35/36 busses and bus stops and have displayed in Spanish.

-MT agreed that Canal Alliance or other organization could distribute the free youth passes to eligible students "for schools that are not currently participating in the program" like Davidson MS.

- Concilio (with support of MT?) could ask SR Schools to provide security guards on busses, maybe just for a few weeks at the start of the school year?

- GGT will talk to Drivers Union about this next week and have sexual harassment discussion with them.

- GGT would like to meet with Canal Concilios again to discuss solutions (follow up with Teri).

- MT would like help from Canal Concilios to publicize youth pass program (follow up with Suzanne).

- GGT is looking at creating posters or other communications about expected behaviors on the busses, GGT could work with Canal youth to help create posters to prevent sexual harassment (follow up with Teri about this).

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MEMORANDUM MARIN TRANSIT

DATE: May 20, 2008
TO: Amy Van Doren, Transit Planning Manager
FROM: Lauren Gradia, Senior Transportation Planner
RE: Bus Service from Canal to San Rafael Transit Center

DRAFT

**For informational
purposes only**

This memorandum gives background and details on transit ridership between the Canal area of San Rafael and the San Rafael Transit Center. This information is presented to help evaluate and develop solutions to issues of over crowding and sexual harassment raised in the Marin County Youth Commission's "Canal Youth Bus Rider Survey 2008 Key Findings".

Marin Transit Findings

- 1) Reports of sexual harassment on vehicles are concerning to Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit and need to be addressed.
- 2) Service from the Canal operates extremely frequently during the morning peak with buses every one to five minutes.
- 3) Buses arriving at the transit center between 7:42 am and 7:52 am are at capacity
- 4) Afternoon trips at 3:00 pm are at capacity.
- 5) Buses within 15 minutes of the full trips do have capacity
- 6) Past experience with a designated supplemental school bus showed students got on the first available bus
- 7) There is limited roadway capacity for additional service during the morning peak.

Recommended next steps include:

- 1) Set up a meeting with youth in Canal via Marin County Youth Commission and include school district and Golden Gate Transit staff.
- 2) Sponsor the social norms campaign suggested by youth commission and post youth-designed posters on buses.
- 3) Look at both operational solutions (request an articulated bus on Route 35 trip arriving at the Transit Center at 7:46 am) and passenger education solutions (ways to encourage passengers to use buses with existing capacity).
- 4) Work with youth on ways to encourage reporting and monitoring of inappropriate behavior
- 5) Have Marin Transit staff (Lucas, our new intern) observe morning and afternoon peak trips



A) San Rafael High School Transit Related Information

San Rafael High School starts at 8:00 am and ends at either 1:55 pm or 3:34 pm depending on the day. San Rafael High School has 2,157 students of which 535 are eligible for the free youth passes and **322 students receive a free youth transit pass.**

The Marin County Youth Commission surveyed 97 youth bus riders, which included about 12% of the students with free youth passes.

B) Service and Ridership from Canal to San Rafael High School

In the morning, Marin Transit runs service between the Canal and the San Rafael Transit Center every one to five minutes on Routes 29, 35, and 36. Adding additional service during this peak will be limited by the roadway capacity. Currently buses in the Canal area get bunched up at stops, and there is additional traffic congestion in this densely populated area from yellow school buses serving elementary schools and single occupancy vehicles.

Table 1 shows the existing service and ridership for the morning trips. The highlighted trips between 7:42 am and 7:52 am are the most heavily used. Students may find that by traveling 15 minutes earlier they can avoid the most heavily used trips. The Route 35 trip arriving at 7:46 am is not an articulated bus because it continues on to another route. Marin Transit can discuss with Golden Gate Transit if there is an additional articulated bus available to do this trip and then go out of service.

Table 1: Morning Service and Ridership for Canal Service to Transit Center

Route Number	Arrival Time at SRTC	Weekly Average Passengers ¹	Bus Type	Capacity ² (Seated + standees)	Load Factor (Pass/Capacity)
35	7:15 am	42	40 ft	50	84%
36	7:16 am	58	Artic	80	72%
35	7:20 am	27	40 ft	50	54%
29	7:25 am	34	40 ft	50	68%
35	7:26 am	44	Artic	80	55%
35	7:36 am	41	Artic	80	51%
36	7:42 am	78	Artic	80	97%
35	7:46 am	50	40ft	50	100%
35	7:52 am	85	Artic	80	106%
29	7:55 am	To be added in December 2008			
35	7:56 am	16	Artic	80	20%

Notes:
 1. Ridership is for the entire Route not just for the section of interest. Ridership based on week starting 4/28/08.
 2. Articulated buses have 60 seats and can comfortably carry at least 20 standees; 40ft vehicles have around 40 seats and can comfortably carry 10 standees.

Table 2 shows the afternoon service and ridership between the San Rafael Transit Center and the Canal on Routes 29, 35, and 36. With the exception of the 3:00 pm departure, the afternoon



service is less crowded than the morning service. Marin Transit will be adding a Route 29 southbound trip at 3:00 pm in December 2008 that will add additional capacity.

Ridership in Table 2 is from a Tuesday in April rather than average weekly riderships since school release times vary by the day of the week.

The difference in ridership on the 3:15 pm bus and the 3:16 pm bus illustrates the difficulty of spreading riders onto multiple buses. If students waited an additional minute or two, they could have a seat on the bus rather than riding on a bus with crush loads. Improved passenger information is needed to let riders know there is another bus coming shortly. Compared to hourly service that exists in much of the local system, having students wait an additional 15 minutes for a less crowded bus is a minor inconvenience.

Table 2: Afternoon Service and Ridership from the San Rafael Transit Center to Canal

Route Number	Arrival Time at SRTC	Passengers ¹	Bus Type	Capacity ² (Seated + standees)	Load Factor (Pass/Capacity)
35	2:00 pm	27	Artic	80	54%
35	2:30 pm	53	Artic	80	66%
29	2:30 pm	22	40ft	50	44%
35	3:00 pm	100	Artic	80	125%
29	3:00 pm	To be added Dec. 2008			
35	3:15 pm	101	Artic	80	126%
36	3:16 pm	45	Artic	80	56%
35	3:30 pm	57	Artic	80	71%
29	3:30 pm	46	40 ft	50	92%
36	3:43 pm	17	Artic	80	21%
35	3:50 pm	38	Artic	80	48%
35	4:00 pm	31	Artic	80	39%

Notes:
 1. Ridership is for the entire Route not just for the section of interest. Ridership from Tuesday April 28, 2008.
 2. Articulated buses have 60 seats and can comfortably carry at least 20 standees; 40ft vehicles have around 40 seats and can comfortably carry 10 standees.

C) Adding Supplemental School Service or Additional Capacity

The Canal area of San Rafael to the San Rafael Transit center has the most frequent service in the Marin Transit system. This area has service more frequently than every 15 minutes during the peaks and uses the largest buses available. New articulated buses that replaced very old buses have improved the passenger experience.

The Canal is a densely populated area of San Rafael that experiences traffic congestion in the mornings from the Marin Transit buses operated by Golden Gate Transit, yellow school buses to elementary schools, and many single occupancy vehicles. As seen in Table 1 there is very little room to add additional frequency to these services without increasing traffic problems and bus bunching.



While there are many cases when yellow school buses are more appropriate for taking children to school, Marin Transit would not recommend them for San Rafael High School. Since there are so many students in the Canal area and yellow school buses have a lower capacity than the articulated buses, this would increase bus congestion and be a significantly higher cost.

Running a small shuttle would also have a minimal effect on the capacity issues. Shuttles carry only 17 passengers, and one of the contributing factors to over crowding is the concentration of demand in a very short window.

Previous experience running a designated supplemental school bus on the Route 35 showed that students took the first bus arriving to their stop rather than waiting for the designated supplemental school bus.

Marin Transit can work with the students on how to spread students across existing buses more effectively. Marin Transit can work with Golden Gate to ensure all vehicles during the peak are the largest available and look at ways to add additional service that doesn't exacerbate issues of bus bunching at stops and roadway congestion.

D) Lower Fares

As clear from the data, Marin Transit has difficulty providing enough transit service to riders in the Canal who are willing to pay the fares or have free youth passes. Lowering the fare will create more over crowding and may increase incidents of sexual harassment.

Marin Transit staff plan to recommend that the Board implement monthly, weekly, and daily passes that will benefit frequent transit riders. The new fare media is expected to be especially beneficial to riders from the Canal. As a result, the Route 35 and 36 may have additional capacity issues in the future.