



June 21, 2017
NVTA Agenda Item 11.3
Continued From: May 17, 2017
Action Requested: INFORMATION

NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY Board Agenda Letter

TO: NVTA Board of Directors
FROM: Kate Miller, Executive Director
REPORT BY: Matthew Wilcox, Manager of Public Transit
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SUBJECT: Update on Vine Transit Data Integration on Google

RECOMMENDATION

That the Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA) Board receive an update on Vine Transit Data Integration in Google Maps.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its May 17th meeting, the NVTA Board was made aware that Vine Real Time Transit information was not available on Google. This report will provide and update to the Board on the status of data integration and provide background about the delays.

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Staff Report
2. Public Comments

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No. The item is information only.

CEQA REQUIREMENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

One of the glaring omissions from NVTA's integration into the regional transit network of the Bay Area is that data has not been accepted by Google Maps. In 2007 Google fully integrated transit information into its maps platform. The format by which this is achieved is called General Transit Feed Specification or GTFS. Integration into Google is an entirely voluntary process. Google does not create its own data rather Google relies on transit properties to provide the data. Google does require any GTFS data submitted for integration to be 100% error free.

Not until about four years ago did GTFS data become the standard for exporting transit schedule data for third party developers. Now it is used worldwide as a means to communicate schedule data not only to Google Maps but hundreds of other platforms. Prior to this, the standard in the Bay Area was a proprietary language used by 511.org. In 2014 NVTA procured an Avail Computer Aided Dispatch and Automated Vehicle Locator (CAD/AVL) system. The installation of the program was completed in mid-2016. A requirement of the contract with Avail Technologies was to prioritize export schedule and real time data to the 511 trip planning system. Exporting scheduling data in GTFS was put on hold until the data being exported to 511 was completed. MTC has since migrated all of its 511 functions to a Google platform and consequently its proprietary language to GTFS.

Since ramping up towards full implementation of Avail in February 2016, there have been continuous errors in the data being exported from Transdev's schedulers (Transdev is NVTA's contractor responsible for providing transit services for Napa Valley residents). Initially these were thought to be bugs in the new Avail system. The major errors were cleaned up, however small errors persisted. NVTA staff persisted in seeking scheduling data that could be integrated into Google Maps. Since the completion of the Avail system, three iterations of the scheduling data was requested, received and submitted to Google over a four month period. A fourth iteration is currently being developed and is anticipated to be completed on June 18th. With each export, errors still remained.

Since the May Board meeting, NVTA staff has discussed this challenge with Transdev management. A new scheduler has been assigned to the task and we anticipate that the June export of the data will be free from errors and the Vine will go live on Google.

A timeline of events since the completion of the agreement on February 9th is below:

2/15/2017 – Transdev sends schedule data to Avail Technologies who use the data to create the GTFS feed.

2/22/2017 – The GTFS feed is posted for the first time to a Google account so Google can retrieve it and add it to Google Maps.

2/23/2017 – Review of the data by the Google evaluation team revealed a series of errors in the schedule export provided by Transdev. The errors fall into three major

categories 1) Bus Stops with the same time offsets, i.e. the bus stopping at two places at the same time; 2) Stops too close together, i.e. two stops located at almost identical latitude and longitude positions; and 3) too fast travel, i.e. a bus going from one stop to another at say 210 km/h.

2/27/2017 – Transdev produces a new schedule with fewer errors.

4/21/2017 – Transdev produces a third schedule export with still fewer errors but still not 100% error free.

6/18/2017 – A fourth schedule will be released. The outcome will be provided at the Board meeting.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None