



NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY Citizen Advisory Committee Agenda Memo

TO: Citizen Advisory Committee
FROM: Kate Miller, Executive Director
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SUBJECT: Vine Transit Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) receive the first quarter Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Vine Transit update.

BACKGROUND

Ridership

Tables 1 through 3, compares the annual difference between first quarter of FY 2023-24 to the same period of FY 2024-25 to show the year-over-year ridership variations.

Table 1 depicts the difference in the City of Napa Ridership in Q1 of Fiscal Year 2023-24 to Q1 of the current federal fiscal year. Although there were two different sets of local routes operated in July – September 2023, there was an overall increase in local ridership of 11.71%.

Table 1: City of Napa Ridership - Comparing Q1 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Q1 FY24*	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Local Routes	31,064	34,701	11.71%	3,637

**In the first quarter of FY 2024, there were two different local (City of Napa) routes: (1) the old local routes of N,S,E and W were in service from July 1 – August 12 (2) the newer Routes A-G were in service from August 14 - Present*

Table 2 shows steady overall ridership growth on regional routes of approximately 7% for the quarter. The route showing the largest percentage improvement in ridership is Route

11X at approximately 51%, but the Route 10 traveling up and down the valley during harvest provided the bulk of the numerical increase.

Table 2: Routes 10, 11, 11X, 21 & 29 Ridership – Comparing Q1 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Q1 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Route 10	40,127	45,353	13.02%	5,226
Route 11	33,738	33,680	-0.17%	(58)
Route 11X	944	1,421	50.53%	477
Route 21	4,053	3,484	-14.04%	(569)
Route 29	9,254	9,935	7.36%	681
Total	88,116	93,873	6.53%	5,757

Ridership decreased on the community shuttles overall by about 11% compared to the same quarter last year as shown in Table 3. Calistoga had low July ridership. NVTA received complaints about the air conditioning on these shuttles not keeping up with the high temperatures. Calistoga will be receiving two new shuttles by the end of Q2 and that should put us in a position to make riders more comfortable next summer. Only the Yountville Bee experienced a ridership increase.

Table 3: Community Shuttles– Comparing Q1 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Q1 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Calistoga Shuttle	4,525	3,946	-12.80%	(579)
St. Helena Shuttle	1,463	1,410	-3.62%	(53)
Yountville Bee	1,345	1,413	5.06%	68
American Canyon Transit	5,167	4,313	-16.53%	(854)
Total	12,500	11,082	-11.34%	(1,418)

VineGo ridership rose nominally by about 3% over the last year as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: VineGo Ridership – Comparing Q4 of FY23 & Q4 of FY24

	Q1 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
VineGo	3,928	4,055	3.23%	127

Table 5 compares the first quarter of the current fiscal year local ridership to the previous quarter (April, May & June of 2024) to provide insight to more recent ridership trends. Route G experienced the most significant ridership growth of nearly 56%. This can be attributed to extending the Route G as part of the August 11th schedule change. The Route was extended further south to serve the Napa Valley College and Health and Human Services, which are two prominent destinations for riders.

Table 5: City of Napa Ridership - Comparing Q4 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Q4 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Napa Local On-Demand (Route A)	980	980	0.00%	0
Route B	6,581	8,026	21.96%	1,445
Route C	14,683	13,675	-6.87%	(1,008)
Route D	1,962	2,805	42.97%	843
Route E	2,816	2,665	-5.36%	(151)
Route F	3,534	3,411	-3.48%	(123)
Route G	2,016	3,139	55.70%	1,123
Total	32,572	34,701	6.54%	2,129

Table 6 compares regional routes to the previous quarter, which experienced an overall increase of approximately 6%. Route 11X experienced the most significant ridership increase of nearly 35%. A new stop was added to the 11X at Devlin at Airport Road as part of the August 11th schedule change. This gives the riders the opportunity to travel to and from the new Vine Bus Maintenance Facility and surrounding warehousing district near the airport in a faster manner. The same stop is served by Route 11, however, Route 11 has more stops on its route than Route 11X.

Table 6: Routes 10, 11, 11X, 21 & 29 Ridership – Comparing Q4 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Q4 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Route 10	39,363	45,353	15.22%	5,990
Route 11	34,038	33,680	-1.05%	(358)
Route 11X	1,056	1,421	34.56%	365
Route 21	4,184	3,484	-16.73%	(700)
Route 29	9,674	9,935	2.70%	261
Total	88,315	93,873	6.29%	5,558

Table 7 compares the community shuttles to the previous quarter, which shows that overall ridership remained relatively stagnant. American Canyon Transit experienced a decline of about 12%, which can be attributed to student ridership - schools did not resume until the week of August 12, which is about halfway through the first quarter of the current fiscal year. All other services experienced an increase in ridership. Calistoga's increase can be attributed to the fact that in May a second shuttle was added. Ridership for Q4 of FY24 is negatively impacted because only one shuttle was operating in the month of April.

Table 7: Community Shuttles– Comparing Q4 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Q4 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Calistoga Shuttle	3,455	3,946	14.21%	491
St. Helena Shuttle	1,319	1,410	6.90%	91
Yountville Bee	1,394	1,413	1.36%	19
American Canyon Transit	4,887	4,313	-11.75%	(574)
Total	11,055	11,082	0.24%	27

Finally, Table 8 depicts a slight decrease in VineGo ridership, which is one of the first decreases quarter-over-quarter since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff will closely monitor the ridership during the next quarter to see if this trend continues. New VineGo vehicles are arriving around January 2025, which will replace the 2007 vehicles. This will enhance the rider experience by offering a more comfortable and smoother ride.

Table 8: VineGo Ridership – Comparing Q4 of FY23 & Q4 of FY24

	Q1 FY24	Q1 FY25	% Difference	Numerical Difference
VineGo	4,288	4,055	-5.43%	(233)

Chart 1 breaks down the fixed route data by route across first quarters dating back to pre-COVID levels and also adds in the prior quarter (April – June 2024) to visually show the changes over time. The local routes and routes 10 and 11 have all experienced the same general trend of a slow recovery with ridership trending in the right direction. All of the other routes have experienced nominal increases and decreases, but overall ridership has remained relatively stagnant since COVID.

Chart 1: Total Fixed Route Ridership Change

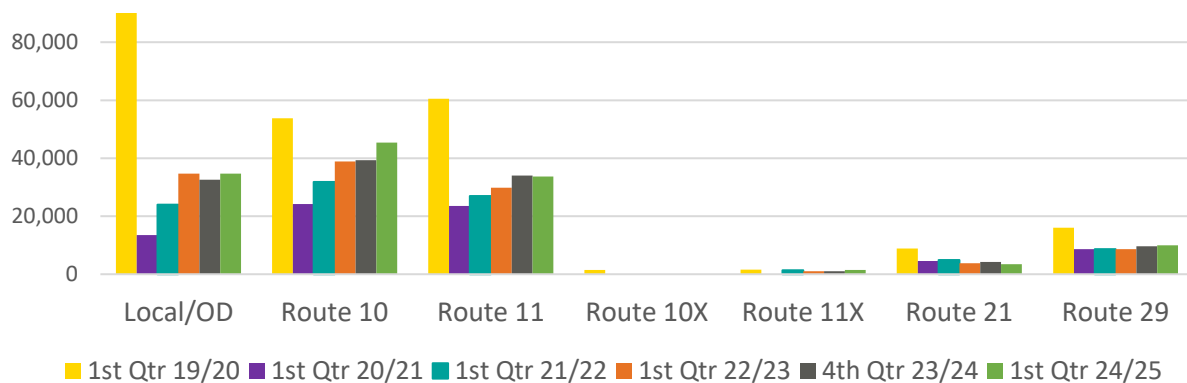
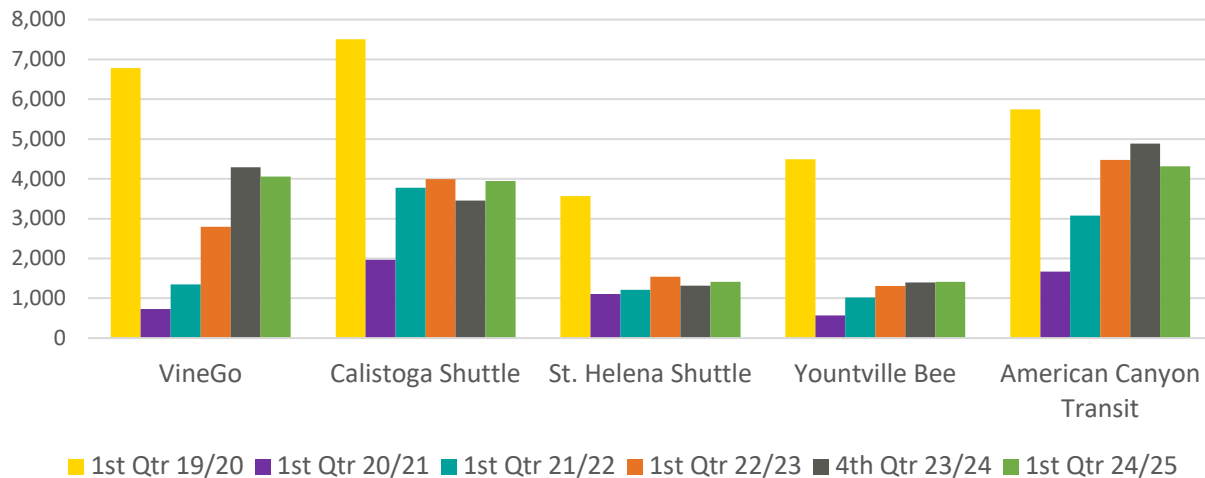


Chart 2 below takes the demand response data and segments it across the different services over the same period as Chart 1. There are differences across the jurisdictional services. St. Helena Shuttle and the Yountville Bee remain below 50% of pre-COVID levels while American Canyon Transit is inching closer to pre-COVID ridership levels. However, all services are trending upwards since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chart 2: Total Demand Response Ridership Change



Finally, Table 9 looks at the missed trips during the first quarter of the current fiscal year and compares it to the same period one year prior. While on-demand missed trips fell in comparison to the prior year, regular missed trips increased by 46. Most missed trips are caused by mechanical issues due to having an aging fleet with many buses past their useful lives. We expect the missed trips to improve in the coming months for multiple reasons:

- We were able to begin operating our new-to-us CNG buses in early October. This will allow Vine Transit to set aside the older vehicles that are more prone to mechanical issues.
- We are going to lease four buses from Golden Gate Transit that will be the primary back up buses.
- In January, NVTA will begin enforcing missed trips by charging Transdev for each missed trip. This is a standard practice that was put on hiatus during the COVID pandemic.

Table 9: Comparing Missed Trips in Q1 of FY24 & Q1 of FY25

	Regular Missed Trips		On-Demand Missed Trips	
	Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25
July	10	41	1	1
August	33	43	2	7
September	27	32	12	0
Total	70	116	15	8

Marketing Efforts

September was Transit Month, which was a successful celebration for Vine Transit. Staff made a concerted effort to post on social media channels and was able to increase its social media engagement by 691% (the average of the results below).

Vine Transit September Social Media Efforts:

Facebook:

- Reach increased 658% (compared to the month prior)
- Content interaction – increased 1,200%
- Link clicks – increased 100%

Instagram:

- Reach – increased 666%
- Content interaction – increased 833%

Nextdoor:

19,531 impressions

Free rides were offered on all routes on September 27th. Additionally, staff setup a table at the transit center during peak travel times and gave away free branded stickers, hats, t-shirts, keychains and carabiners to express our gratitude to our riders.

Direct outreach efforts during the first quarter of this current fiscal year included:

- Distributing Mobility Assistance Informational Brochures with a Meals on Wheels delivery in July, reaching approximately 788 seniors throughout Napa Valley
- Attending City of Napa’s National Night Out on August 6th
- Attending American Canyon’s Meet Me in the Streets on August 14
- Attending UpValley Family Center’s Back to School Night Celebration on August 30th
- Presenting to residents at Rohlffs Manor on September 17th
- Presenting to the Senior Center on September 27th

In the coming weeks, a call for artists will be sent out in the North Bay to solicit artwork for a new bus wrap. A selection committee will choose their top three favorite artists based

on artistic style and design for a bus wrap for the new Gillig Electric buses that are expected to arrive in Napa around June/July 2025.

Vine Transit Technologies and Challenges

The NVTA Board of Directors requested additional information about Vine Transit communications technology. We wanted to share with CAC the summary of communication systems currently used to deploy Vine Transit services and a brief summary of the challenges associated with those technologies.

The *Computer Aided Dispatch* and Automated Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) system is necessary to provide real time arrival information on Vine fixed route buses and to coordinate bus deployment with scheduling software.

Challenges:

- NVTA currently has a severe vehicle shortage and often times a bus without CAD/AVL technology is substituted for a fixed route bus that is out of service.
- Drivers neglect to log in or login properly
- Signal strength in various areas outside the City of Napa is weak or non-existent which interferes with bus/base station communications
- Connections between the Mobile Data Terminal and the internet are necessary to upload data – there are limited connections until the solar canopies are completed.
- Unstable router connectivity due to vibration and old router technology (currently being replaced)

Significant efforts are underway to resolve these challenges with the CAD/AVL provider and Transdev staff. If new measures that are in place are unsuccessful, staff will recommend that NVTA procure a new CAD/AVL contract in the next 12 months.

Radios

NVTA currently operates a low-band radio system that it inherited from the City of Napa for fixed Route and the County of Napa for paratransit around 1998. The radio system is now obsolete, and NVTA received funding in 2023 to upgrade to high-band radios.

Challenges:

- NVTA needs cooperation from the County of Napa and the City of Napa to accommodate this frequency on radio towers that allow for coverage through Napa County and into Solano and Contra Costa County, which has caused significant delays in NVTA's ability to move forward with the new system. During a 10-month process with the City of Napa, NVTA's consultant, Day Wireless, has submitted an updated application to the Federal Communications Commission

on September 19th and once approved NVTA can replace all its radios within the month.

CAD/AVL and Radio communications are not the only means for identifying the location of the bus but are the most sophisticated. Transdev can use the DriveCam but is typically used in more urgent situations. The system allows dispatchers to see “breadcrumbs” of where that bus traveled during the day and a live video of the drive. It is not a program that is open all the time but is useful for reviewing driver or rider behavior.

ATTACHMENTS

None