



NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY Board Agenda Memo

TO: NVRTA Board of Directors
FROM: Danielle Schmitz, Executive Director
REPORT BY: Rebecca Schenck, Director of Transit
(707) 259-8636 / Email: rschenck@nvta.ca.gov
SUBJECT: Transit Youth Fares

RECOMMENDATION

That the Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVRTA) Board receive a report on Transit Youth Fares.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its October 18, 2024 meeting the NVRTA Board received a comprehensive report about free and subsidized fare programs offered by public transit providers in the North Bay Area. On November 20, 2024, the Board requested additional information about costs to provide free fares for K-12, low income, and elderly and disabled riders. Now, in October of 2025, the Board has requested a focused look at Youth Fare for those ages 6 to 18. Currently, children 5 and under ride for free with an adult.

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

It is important to understand that public transit is already very heavily subsidized by over 90% in some cases. The current cost to own and operate a car in the U.S. is \$12,297 per year. The median fare for an Uber or Lyft ride in the U.S. is \$15.99, with regular users

spending over \$100 per month on rideshare. The cost to commute by Vine bus annually is \$444 for youth and \$660 for adults.

Current Youth Focused Fare Discounts and Programs

- NVTA provides several fare options for youths riding transit. The table below illustrates youth fares compared to adult fares:

Table 1: Youth and Adult Fares

Fare Type	Youth	Adults
Single Ride	\$1.25	\$2.00
Day Passes	\$5.00	\$7.00
20 Ride Pass	\$21.00	\$30.00
31 Day Pass	\$37.00	\$55.00

- Summer Youth Pass: \$20 for an unlimited number of rides from June to August. A total of 120 passes were sold but only used an average of 2.3 times. Since each pass was used a limited number of times, the reduced price did not seem to induce additional trips
- Fares on the shuttle services operating in the Cities of American Canyon, Calistoga, and St. Helena and in the Town of Yountville are subsidized by the local jurisdictions. Youth ride for \$0.50 on American Canyon and St. Helena Shuttles. On the Calistoga Shuttle, all residents pay \$1.00. The jurisdictions provide an additional contribution to meet the 10% to 15% mandatory farebox required by the Transportation Development Act (TDA). Yountville contributes the full 10% and it is free to all riders. All other jurisdictions have the option to increase their contribution to cover youth fares.
- Napa Valley College students receive a pass in exchange for paying \$7.79 a semester for full time students and \$3.89 a semester for part time students as part of the assessed student fees. Students show their ID which allows them to ride all Vine services for free. A reciprocal agreement with the Solano Transportation Authority allows students to ride Soltrans, Fairfield, and Vacaville transit systems for free and in exchange, students attending Solano Community Colleges may ride Vine Transit for free.

Survey Results Free Fares and Ridership at NVTA

NVTA and MTC each recently issued surveys. For riders responding to the MTC survey, fares were significantly less of an issue than service frequency. On the survey that NVTA administered which was distributed to a sampling of 1,400 Napa Valley residents, cost of fares did not rise to the top of issues or barriers for riding transit. The table below illustrates the sum of the responses received.

Figure 1: ENGLISH: What Factors Impact your use of public transit

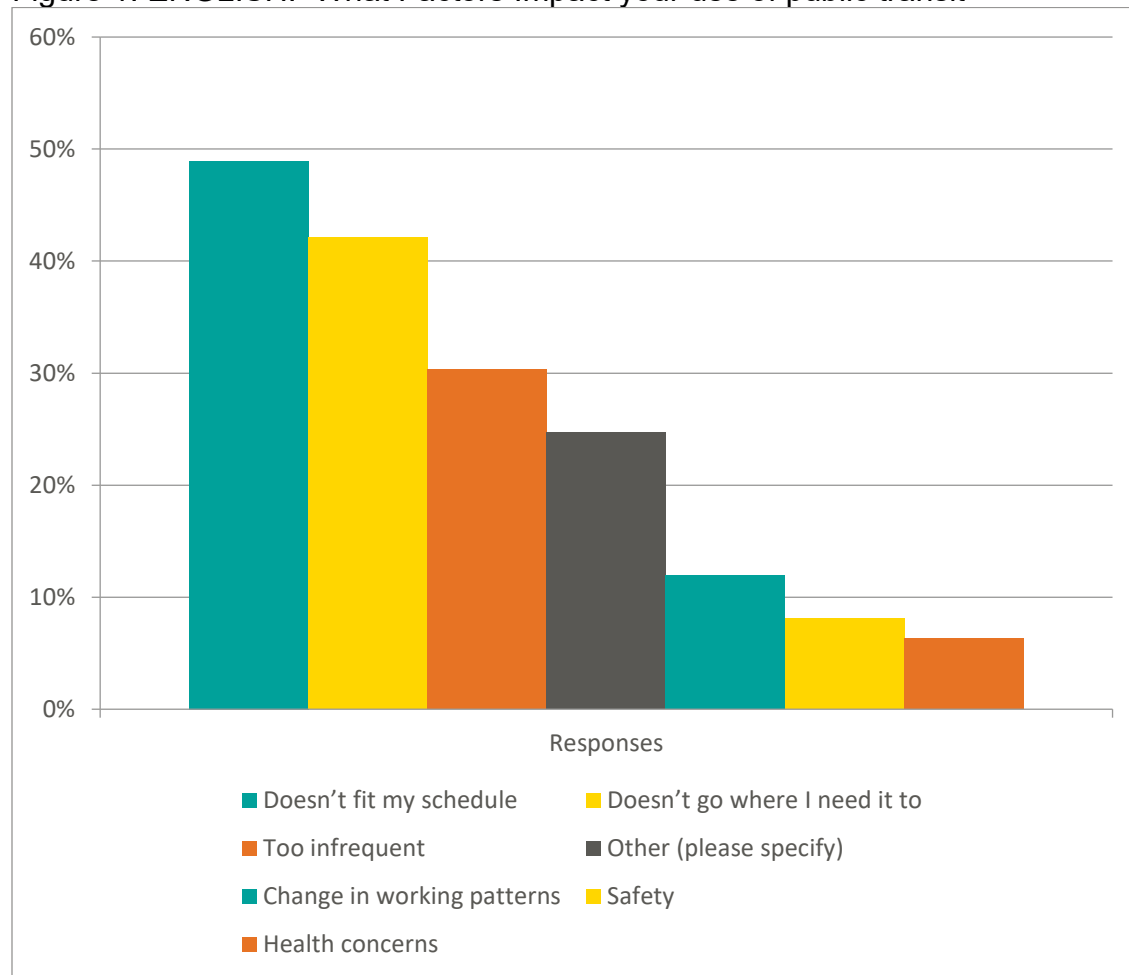
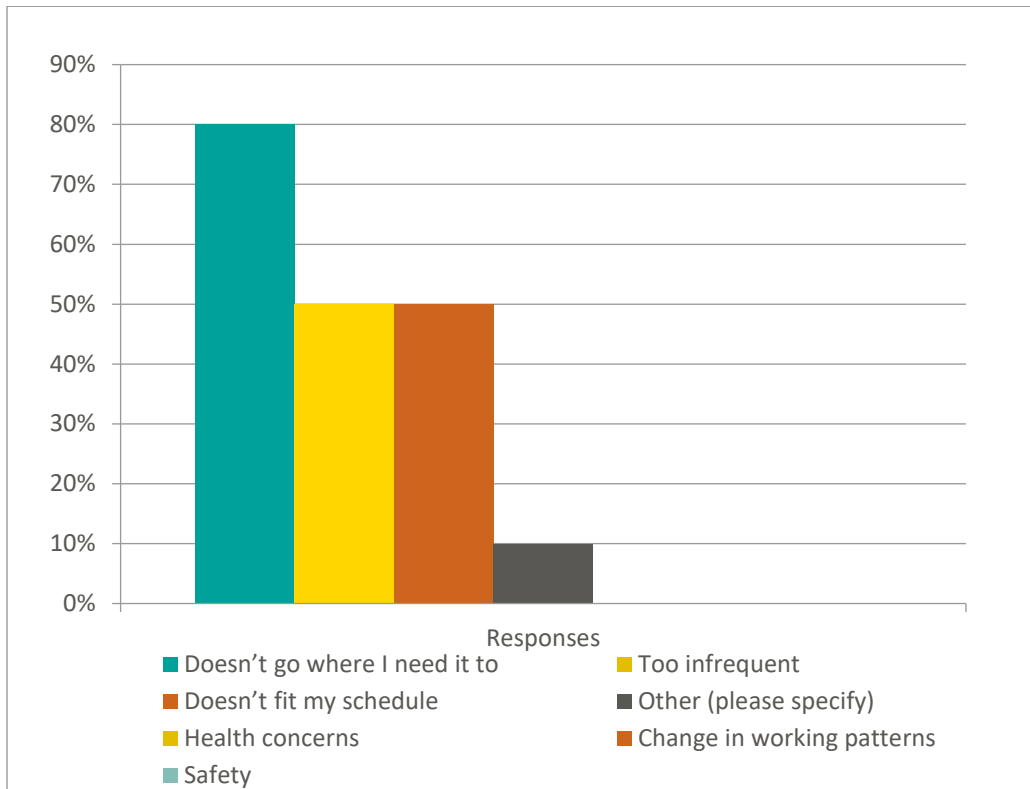


Figure 2: SPANISH: What Factors Impact your use of public transit



Costs for Youth Rides

The chart below shows the annual cost of free fares that NVTa would need covered by an alternative funding source(s). To cover youth rides specifically, NVTa would need approximately \$205,000 annually to meet the 15% state-required farebox recovery ratio.

Table 2: Youth fare recovery by service, annually

FY25	Youth
Vine	\$174,038
Vine Go	\$12,535
American Canyon	\$8,759
Yountville*	\$4,866
St. Helena	\$4,784
Calistoga	\$0
Farebox Collections per TDA Ratios	\$204,982

*Note Yountville already covering this \$4,866

Options to Grow Existing or Start New Youth Programs

NVTA recently met with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) to coordinate how we can work together to better serve students and grow youth ridership. NVTA and NVUSD staff have agreed to hold quarterly meetings and work on a transportation roadmap that will review the following:

- Coordinate bell times, school specific calendars and route service
- Filed trip coordination
- Dissemination of general transit information through the school district mail
- Site access to school locations that currently do not have transit service
- NVUSD bus pass purchase for students and/or pass sales at school offices
- Opportunities to integrate transit planning into the curriculum

The table below provides an illustration of entity who have recently purchased bulk bus passes for youth

Table 3: Bulk Passes Distributed to Youth August 2024 to December 2024

Date	Entity	Total # of Youth Passes Purchased	Type of Pass Purchased
8/1 and 8/8/2024	Blue Oak School	180	Single Ride Pass
8/21/2024	NVUSD Special Education	235	31-Day Pass
		230	20-Ride Pass
9/16/2024	Napa County Office of Education	30	20-Ride Pass
9/30/2024	Browns Valey Elementary	124	Single Ride Pass
10/1/2024	Napa HHSA - Child Welfare Services	15	20-Ride Pass
10/21/2024	Browns Valey Elementary	51	All Day-Pass
10/31/2024	Snow Elementary School	156	Single Ride Pass
11/12/2024	Alta Heights Elementary	56	All Day-Pass
11/12/2024	Silverado Middle School	22	All Day-Pass
	Total Number of Youth Passes	1,099	

STRATEGIC GOALS MET BY THIS PROPOSAL

Not applicable

ATTACHMENT(S)

None