



NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY COVER MEMO

SUBJECT

Vine Transit Update

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Information only. This report will provide an update on the operational performance for Vine Transit services covering the third quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21. The report will also provide an update on operational and service changes related to the pandemic.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the Vine's operational performance during the third quarter for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21, covering the period of January 1 to March 31, 2021, and provides an update on service changes in response to growing ridership trends. In March 2020, a series of Vine service modifications were implemented in response to the Pandemic stay at home order and corresponding lower ridership. The board memo compares the third quarter of FY 2021 (Jan – Mar) to both the third quarter of FY 2020 and to the previous quarter (Oct - Dec) to highlight the differences between the same time period last year and to recent months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 3, 2021, the State of California moved Napa County from the Widespread Risk Level (Purple Tier) to the Substantial Risk Level (Red Tier). The less restrictive Red Tier meant that most activities reopened in the County with various modifications. This resulted in Vine Transit ridership increases, which are anticipated to grow if COVID cases and vaccination rates trend towards the less restrictive Orange (April 7, 2021), Yellow & Green Tiers. As a result of the changes in tiers and increased ridership in March, NVRTA is planning the following changes beginning in May 2021:

Return to a weekday schedule on the Routes 10 and 11 (currently running on Saturday schedules); implement a fixed-route/on-demand hybrid which introduces two new fixed routes and maintains the existing on-demand service in the City of Napa; and extend hours on Friday and Saturday nights in Yountville and Calistoga by two additional hours.

FISCAL IMPACT

None



NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Board Agenda Letter

TO: NVTA Board of Directors
FROM: Kate Miller, Executive Director
REPORT BY: Rebecca Schenck, Transit Manager
(707) 259-8636 / Email: rschenck@nvta.ca.gov
SUBJECT: Vine Transit Update

RECOMMENDATION

Information only. This report will provide an update on the operational performance for Vine Transit services covering the third quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21. The report will also provide an update on operational and service changes related to the pandemic.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None

BACKGROUND & DISCUSSION

Summary of Pandemic-related Operational Changes

In March 2020, NVTA made a number of service changes in response to reduced ridership demand associated with the coronavirus pandemic and public health orders issued by the State and County of Napa. Specifically, service hours were reduced, fare payment was suspended, seat spacing was introduced, and buses began using rear door only boarding whenever feasible to ensure the safety of riders and drivers.

In mid-March, weekday service hours on Routes 10 and 11 were reduced to a Saturday schedule. Routes 10X and 11X were suspended – after already showing mixed ridership performance in the months preceding the pandemic. On April 27th 2020, local fixed route services in the City of Napa (A-H) were suspended and transitioned to Stop to Stop On-Demand service for local trips. On May 13th 2020, following the County of Napa's revised Shelter at Home order, NVTA posted notices requiring the use of face coverings by passengers and staff. All of these service changes remained in effect during Q3 of FY21.

NVTA worked with the Vine service contractor, Transdev, to install clear protective barriers in the driver's compartments on transit buses, for the protection of drivers and passengers. The project was completed in early September, and fare collection resumed on Sunday, September 13th, 2020. It should be noted that the Vine was out in front of most Bay Area systems installing driver safety barriers and resuming fare collection. There remains no established driver safety barrier option for the smaller, cutaway shuttle buses.

Napa On-Demand riders pay the same local \$1.60 full fare, \$1.10 student fare, and \$0.80 reduced fare for elderly and disabled riders that were previously established for local routes; 20-ride, and 31-day fare passes are also accepted. The Clipper fare card is encouraged and NVTA, in partnership with MTC and other transit operators, rolled out a full Clipper marketing campaign to introduce the new Clipper-START program, which launched in January 2021 and provides subsidized fares for eligible low-income adults. Staff continues to coordinate with MTC on the next generation of Clipper (Clipper 2.0) and anticipates the rollout of a new Clipper Mobile app sometime in April 2021.

NVTA continues to support auxiliary Emergency Operation Center (EOC) functions that include meal delivery to residents in isolation and quarantine sites, food bank distribution while centers are closed to the public, and related transportation.

Vine Transit Performance

The first four tables compare ridership across different services in the third quarter of FY 2020-21 (January-March) to the same period in the prior fiscal year. Table 1 shows an 83.44% decline in ridership from January to March 2020 on the local fixed routes in the City of Napa as compared to the On-Demand routes that served the City of Napa during the third quarter of the current fiscal year. Nevertheless the stop to stop on demand services in March of 2021 had the single highest ridership than any other month during the pandemic - there were a total of 5,449 riders, an increase of 1,141 riders over the month of February 2021.

Table 1: Routes (A-H) Ridership and On Napa On Demand – Comparing Q3 of FY20 & FY21

	FY 19/20	(On-Demand) FY 20/21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Total	80,684	13,361	-83.44%	-67,323

Table 2 indicates that the decrease in ridership on the regional and express routes (10, 11, 21 and 29) has been less severe than on the local routes. The decrease in the third quarter between fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 was -54.68% percent. Route 21

showed the smallest percentage drop in ridership (-46.75%) of all of the regional and express routes.

Table 2: Routes 10, 11, 21 and 29 Ridership – Comparing Q3 of FY20 & FY21

	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Route 10	39,452	20,225	-48.74%	-19,227
Route 11	46,318	19,876	-57.09%	-26,442
Route 10X	1,648	N/A	N/A	N/A
Route 11X	3,024	N/A	N/A	N/A
Route 21	7,538	4,014	-46.75%	-3,524
Route 29	14,649	6,928	-52.71%	-7,721
Total	112,629	51,044	-54.68%	-61,585

Table 3 shows the ridership patterns on the four community shuttles. The combined ridership is down 68.91% compared to the same quarter in the prior fiscal year. The ridership declines were fairly similar across all the community shuttles in the third quarter of the current fiscal year. March 2021 ridership increased significantly over ridership in February 2021 as Napa County entered the Red Tier.

Table 3: Community Shuttles– Comparing Q3 of FY20 & FY21

	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Calistoga Shuttle	4,767	1,541	-67.67%	-3,226
St. Helena Shuttle	3,313	1,060	-68.00%	-2,253
Yountville Trolley	3,170	1,154	-63.60%	-2,016
American Canyon Transit	6,230	1,679	-73.05%	-4,551
Total	17,480	5,434	-68.91%	-12,046

VineGo ridership also dropped precipitously (-85.96%) compared to the same time last year as shown in Table 4. NVTa has decreased the number of vehicles serving VineGo. Many of the customers who use VineGo traveled for programs that have been suspended during the pandemic such as Callabria Day Program, Napa Senior Center events, and Clinic Olé classes.

Table 4: VineGo Ridership – Comparing Q3 of FY20 & FY21

	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
VineGo	5,021	705	-85.96%	-4,316

Tables 5, 6 and 7, compare the second quarter of FY 2020-21 to the third quarter of FY 2020-21 to provide additional context on ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 5 shows a slight increase in On-Demand ridership in the City of Napa between the last two quarters. This is most likely caused by the movement of Napa County from the Widespread Risk Level (Purple Tier) to the Substantial Risk Level (Red Tier) in early March. The less restrictive Red Tier meant that most activities reopened in the County with various modifications. As a result of more openings and travel not being restricted to only essential, Napa Local On-Demand ridership experienced higher demand in the month of March, resulting an overall increase in ridership.

Table 5 Napa Local On-Demand Ridership – Comparing Q2 of FY21 & Q3 of FY21

	Q2 FY 21	Q3 FY 21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Napa Local On-Demand	12,654	13,361	5.59%	707

Ridership decreased over the prior quarter on the regional routes, except Route 21, as seen in Table 6. This is most likely caused by Napa being in the more restrictive Purple Tier in January and February, thus causing previous long-distance commuters to continue to work from home.

Table 6: Routes 10, 11, 21 & 29 Ridership – Comparing Q2 of FY21 & Q3 of FY21

	Q2 FY 21	Q3 FY 21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Route 10	21,121	20,225	-4.24%	-896
Route 11	21,660	19,876	-8.24%	-1,784
Route 10X	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Route 11X	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Route 21	3,641	4,014	10.24%	373
Route 29	8,193	6,928	-15.44%	-1,265
Total	54,615	51,044	-6.54%	-3,571

For the community shuttles, ridership increased on all services (25.79%) compared to the second quarter of the current fiscal year as seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Community Shuttles– Comparing Q2 of FY21 & Q3 of FY21

	Q2 FY 21	Q3 FY 21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
Calistoga Shuttle	1,403	1,541	9.84%	138
St. Helena Shuttle	704	1,060	50.57%	356
Yountville Trolley	763	1,154	51.25%	391
American Canyon Transit	1,450	1,679	15.79%	229
Total	4,320	5,434	25.79%	1,114

VineGo ridership decreased by 141 passengers when compared to the second quarter of the current fiscal year as seen in Table 8.

Table 8: VineGo Ridership – Comparing Q2 of FY21 & Q3 of FY21

	Q2 FY 21	Q3 FY 21	% Difference	Numerical Difference
VineGo	846	705	-16.67%	-141

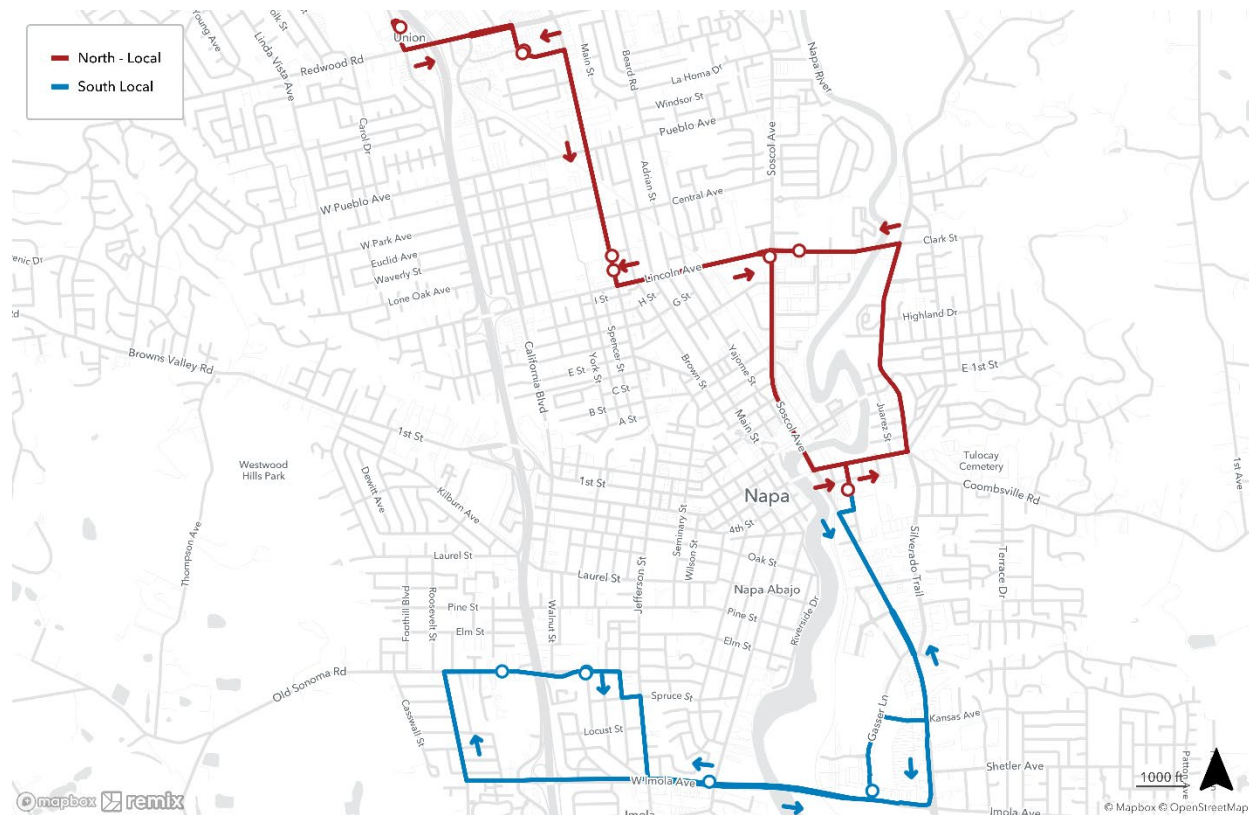
The final table (Table 9) shows the on-time performance for the four fixed route services that NVTa is currently operating. The worst performing route is Route 21 and this is driven by 1) the Napa Valley College stop not being used, unless requested, when in-person classes were suspended and 2) drivers not being able to hold the eastbound Fairfield Transit Center time point due to other operators needing the space. Staff is going to update the Route 21 schedule in May to serve Napa Valley College and eliminate the Fairfield Transit Center as a time point going eastbound, which will increase the currently low on-time performance for Route 21.

Table 9: On-Time Performance for FY 20/21 (Third Quarter)

	On-Time	Late	Early
Route 10	68.6%	16.1%	15.3%
Route 11	63.4%	20.7%	15.9%
Route 21	52.6%	11.6%	35.7%
Route 29	74.2%	18.5%	7.3%
Average	64.7%	16.7%	18.6%

May Service Changes to Accommodate Anticipated Ridership Increases

Staff worked with its on-demand technology provider, DoubleMap, to review the on-demand service and to consider ways that the agency could maintain stop to stop on-demand services in the City of Napa while maintaining reasonable wait times. The on-demand services have allowed staff to better understand where riders are starting and ending their trips, and while it emulates the general areas that were speculated by survey and automatic passenger counter data used in the Comprehensive Operational Analysis, the on-demand service rider data is significantly more granular and removes some of the mystery about actual trips confounded by forced transfer locations. Using the improved data, Transloc, DoubleMap's parent company, created a heat map and built four potential scenarios for stabilizing the system as ridership demand increases. Staff selected the option that was most likely to generate more riders. Some modifications were made to address the City of Napa's street infrastructure constraints. The two new routes, currently known as *North* and *South*, will operate along the high shopping area destinations between the Redwood Park and Ride to Imola/South Napa Market Place and ending in a loop along Foster/Old Sonoma Roads and Jefferson Street. The new routes will operate on 30 minute headways beginning and 7:30 AM and ending at 5:30 PM. The idea behind this proposal is that the fixed routes becomes a more convenient option for riders in the high rider demand areas which will relieve pressure on the on-demand vehicles serving these areas and deploying them elsewhere in the City. Stop to stop on-demand services, however, will still remain an option in these areas.



STRATEGIC GOALS MET BY THIS PROPOSAL

Goal 1: Serve the transportation needs of the entire community regardless of age, income or ability

Goal 2: Improve system safety in order to support all modes and serve all users

Transit service continues to provide essential transportation for access to services and employment. Additional steps are being taken to improve safety for passengers and staff.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None