



Agenda Item No. (4)

To: Transportation Committee/Committee of the Whole
Meeting of April 25, 2019

From: Ron Downing, Director of Planning
Mona Babauta, Deputy General Manager, Bus Division
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **AUTHORIZE THE SETTING OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED
CHANGES TO GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT COMMUTE ROUTES IN
CENTRAL AND NORTHERN MARIN COUNTY**

Recommendation

The Transportation Committee recommends that the Board of Directors authorize the setting of a public hearing to receive public comment on a proposal to modify Golden Gate Transit commute routes in Central and Northern Marin County. The public hearing would take place on Thursday, June 20, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza, San Francisco.

This matter will be presented to the Board of Directors at its April 26, 2019 meeting for appropriate action.

Summary

Board policy requires that a public hearing be held for service changes that result in the discontinuation of a route. If approved, this action would set a public hearing for the discontinuance of Route 44. The public hearing would also include the discontinuance of the Sleepy Hollow segment of Route 27 (which is a portion of only 2 of the 34 weekday Route 27 trips) and related improvements to Routes 24, 38, 54, 56, and 58.

Staff recommends pursuing service changes that would enhance transit service for the majority of residents of the Ross Valley, Terra Linda, Marinwood, and Novato. Resources would be reallocated from poor performing service, including Route 44 and the Sleepy Hollow segment of Route 27, to increase the span of service and frequency, extend service to residential areas along Las Gallinas Avenue in San Rafael, reduce travel times to/from San Francisco, and target areas where ridership potential is greatest.

Proposed Service Changes

Changes to commute routes in the Sir Francis Drake corridor, Marinwood, and Novato are proposed, as described below.

Sir Francis Drake Corridor:

- Expand the express portion of Route 24X, which provides commute service during weekday peak periods between the Sir Francis Drake corridor and San Francisco, by operating non-stop between College of Marin and San Francisco.
- During periods when Routes 24 and 24X operate simultaneously, Route 24 would begin and end at College of Marin rather than originating in or continuing to Fairfax. These short trips would be designated “24A” to differentiate it from Route 24 trips that operate the full length of the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard corridor.
- Service levels on Routes 24A and 24X would be improved to every 20 minutes from every 30 minutes.
- The one morning trip (typically five passengers) and the one evening trip (typically one passenger) on the segment of the Route 27 that provide service between Sleepy Hollow and San Anselmo Hub would be discontinued due to low ridership. Alternative service would be available by boarding Route 24X along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.
- Route 24 would skip the Highway 101 bus pads south of Lucky Drive to provide faster service to customers in the Sir Francis Drake corridor. Alternative service to these bus pads would be available on Routes 18 (peak trips) and 27 (midday trips).

Marinwood and Novato:

- Discontinue Route 44, which provides commute service during weekday peak periods between Lucas Valley, Marinwood, and San Francisco, due to low ridership.
- Extend Route 38, which provides commute service during weekday peak periods between Terra Linda and San Francisco, from Terra Linda to Marinwood along Las Gallinas Avenue and Miller Creek Road. Existing service along Del Ganado Road in Terra Linda would be discontinued and replaced by service on Freitas Parkway at Montecillo Road. This reconfigured route would serve the highest ridership bus stops in Marinwood and dramatically increase service levels compared to Route 44.
- Expand Route 58 by adding an afternoon trip to provide additional travel options for Marinwood and Lucas Valley residents who previously used Route 44.
- Increase the span and frequency of service on Route 56, which provides commute service during weekday peak periods between San Marin, Novato, and San Francisco. The route would be renumbered “56X” to reflect the express nature of its service.
- Focus service on Routes 54 and 54C along South Novato Boulevard and in central Novato. Service in San Marin would be replaced by increased service on Route 56X.
- Route 54 would skip the Highway 101 bus pads south of Alameda del Prado to provide faster service to customers in Novato. Alternative service to these bus pads would be available on Routes 38, 54C, and 58.

This package of service changes focuses service in areas of higher demand, simplifies route structures, provides faster and more frequent service for many riders and would be cost neutral to the District, as presented. If approved subsequent to the public hearing, these changes would take effect in December 2019.

Background

Changing ridership patterns combined with a number of small-scale service changes have resulted in some commute routes providing service where ridership is poor, while other routes have

overlapping service due to modifications made over time. This proposal would add service to markets where ridership potential is higher, eliminate some segments that are poorly performing, and streamline redundant service.

The District implemented Route 24X in September 2016 to address passenger complaints about delays at Lucky Drive Bus Pad related to traffic congestion from the Richmond – San Rafael Bridge. A third lane opened on the bridge in April 2018, resulting in reduced traffic delays at this location. However, customers continue to choose Route 24X over Route 24 when both operate concurrently. This has created an imbalance in passenger loads that is especially noticeable further west in the Sir Francis Drake corridor, where Route 24 buses are nearly empty in comparison to Route 24X buses.

Similarly, ridership on Route 27 west of the San Anselmo Hub is quite low. The District proposed cancellation of service to Sleepy Hollow in December 2016, but service was maintained based on community feedback indicating that customers would begin using the service. However, no new ridership has materialized in the intervening period, and the one morning and one evening trip in Sleepy Hollow continue to average just three passengers (five passengers in the morning and one passenger in the evening).

Board-adopted performance metrics include a ridership standard of 20 passengers per trip on average for commute routes. Route 44 averaged 15.9 passengers per trip and Route 58 averaged 19.1 passengers per trip for the six-month period ending in February 2019. These are two of the lowest performing routes in the system and have an overlapping service area. Roughly half of Route 44 riders board and alight at Highway 101 bus pad stops and could take Route 58 instead. Routes 44 and 58 both serve these stops within a few minutes of each other, so Route 58 is a viable service alternative for these riders. This shift in ridership would improve the productivity of Route 58, allowing it to surpass the District's minimum standard. The remaining Route 44 riders could take the extended Route 38, which has capacity to absorb additional riders.

Ridership growth opportunities on Route 56 have been limited by its complete duplication of Route 54 in San Marin and relatively shorter service span. While these routes exceed the District's minimum standard of 20 passengers per trip on average, there is an opportunity for ridership growth by streamlining the overlap and enhancing the span of service and frequency on Route 56. By terminating Route 54 in central Novato, enhanced Route 56X would provide faster, more frequent, and simplified service for San Marin residents. This service change would also eliminate delays for San Marin riders who currently use Route 54 instead of Route 56; historically, delays along South Novato Boulevard have generated complaints from San Marin riders.

The *Short-Range Transit Plan Fiscal Years 2016/17 – 2025/26, Strategic Vision for Golden Gate Transit Regional Bus Service*, and industry best practices indicate that providing fast, frequent service that is reliable and easy to understand improves the chances of maintaining existing ridership levels and attracting new riders. The District could provide better transit service to a larger number of people by modifying commute service in Central and Northern Marin County, as described above. The service change proposal is cost neutral, wherein savings from reducing or eliminating underperforming service are reinvested in the overall bus system to increase the frequency and span of service for the majority of residents.

Title VI Impacts

Title VI guidelines issued by the Federal Transit Administration and the Title VI policy approved by the Board in August 2013 dictate that major service changes, which affect 25% or more of revenue service miles per route, be analyzed for equity. This threshold will be met for Route 44. Therefore, a Title VI equity analysis will be conducted and will be presented, along with other information, to the Board to inform their decision regarding the potential elimination of the Route 44.

Public Notification

If the proposal to hold this public hearing is approved by the Board, outreach on the proposal will be conducted during the month of May. Public notification activities will include:

- Three public workshops to be held in San Anselmo, Marinwood, and Novato.
- Advertisements in the *Marin Independent Journal*, *Pacific Sun* and *La Voz* announcing the public meetings.
- Posters on board buses advertising the public meetings.
- Direct outreach to passengers on Routes 38 and 44 and the Sleepy Hollow segment of the Route 27.
- Press releases to local media.
- Social media postings on Facebook and Twitter.
- Email blast to customers and community-based organizations.

Translation of all printed materials and handouts in Spanish will be available, per the District's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

Public Comment Process

Public comments on this proposal can be submitted in several different ways:

1. Attend a meeting or hearing and comment directly;
2. Email publichearing@goldengate.org; and/or,
3. Send written comments to the District Secretary.







The District's practice is to treat all comments equally without regard to the manner in which the comments are submitted or received. Therefore, individuals need not attend the public hearing and provide testimony in person if they have commented through email or written forms. All comments received through the above methods will be considered in the final recommendation. Comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, June 21, 2019.

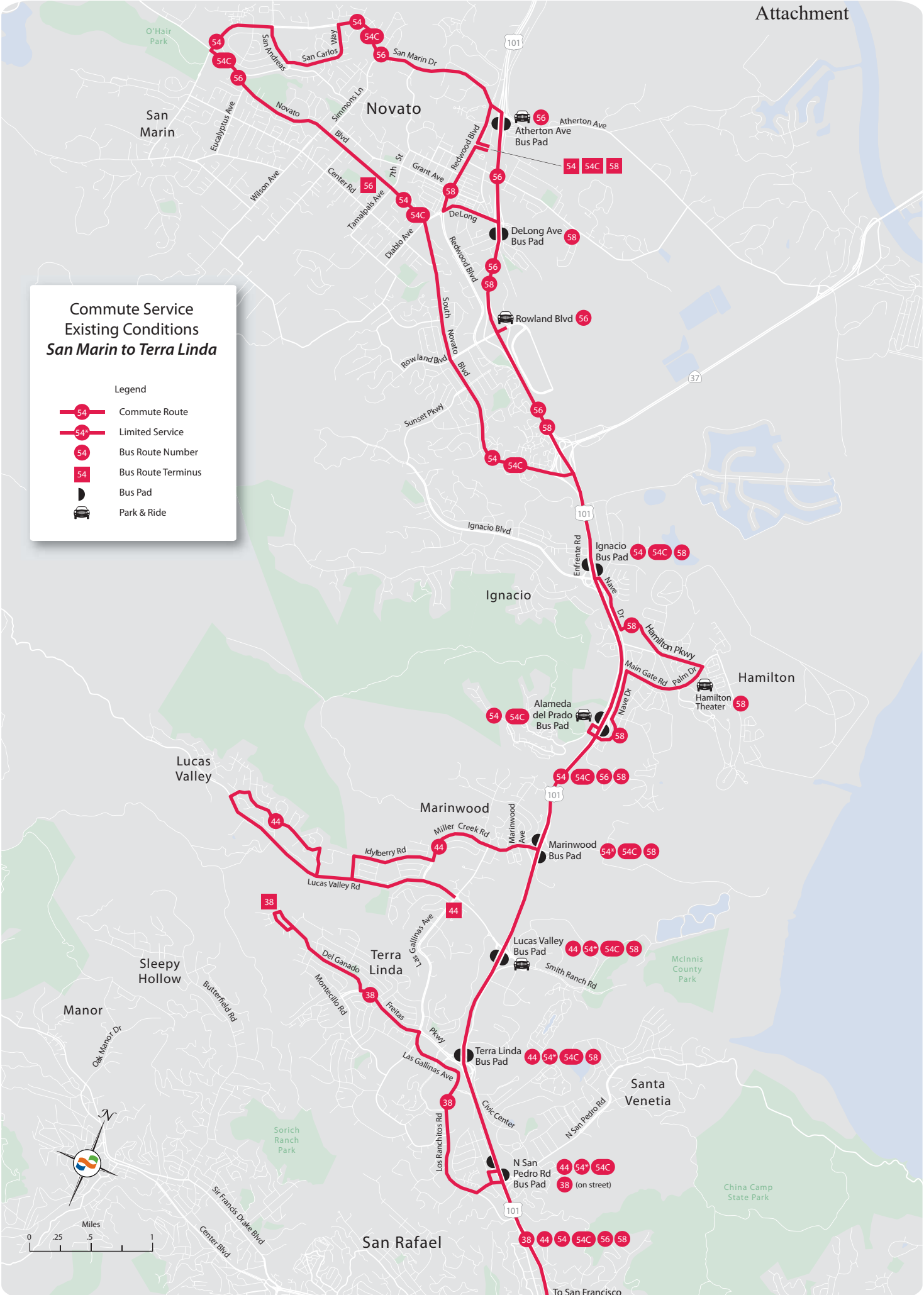
Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of providing a public hearing and associated outreach is estimated at less than \$5,000 and will be covered by the existing Marketing and Communications Department budget.

Attachments: San Marin to Terra Linda Map of Commute Service Existing Conditions
San Marin to Terra Linda Map of Proposed Commute Service Changes
Sir Francis Drake Corridor Map of Commute Service Existing Conditions
Sir Francis Drake Corridor Map of Proposed Commute Service Changes

Commute Service Existing Conditions San Marin to Terra Linda

- Legend
-  Commute Route
 -  Limited Service
 -  Bus Route Number
 -  Bus Route Terminus
 -  Bus Pad
 -  Park & Ride








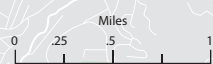
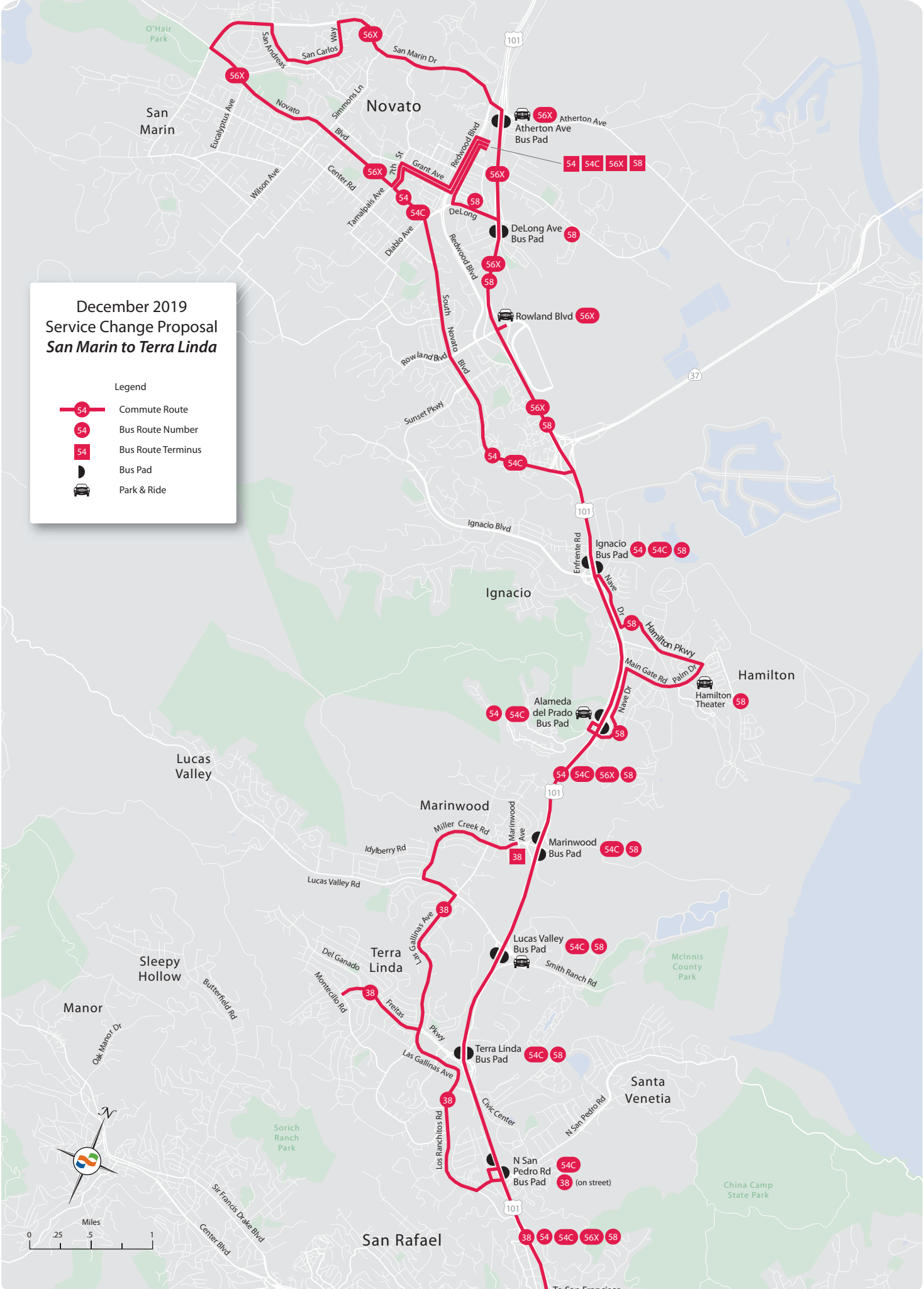
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To San Francisco

**December 2019
Service Change Proposal
San Marin to Terra Linda**







Legend

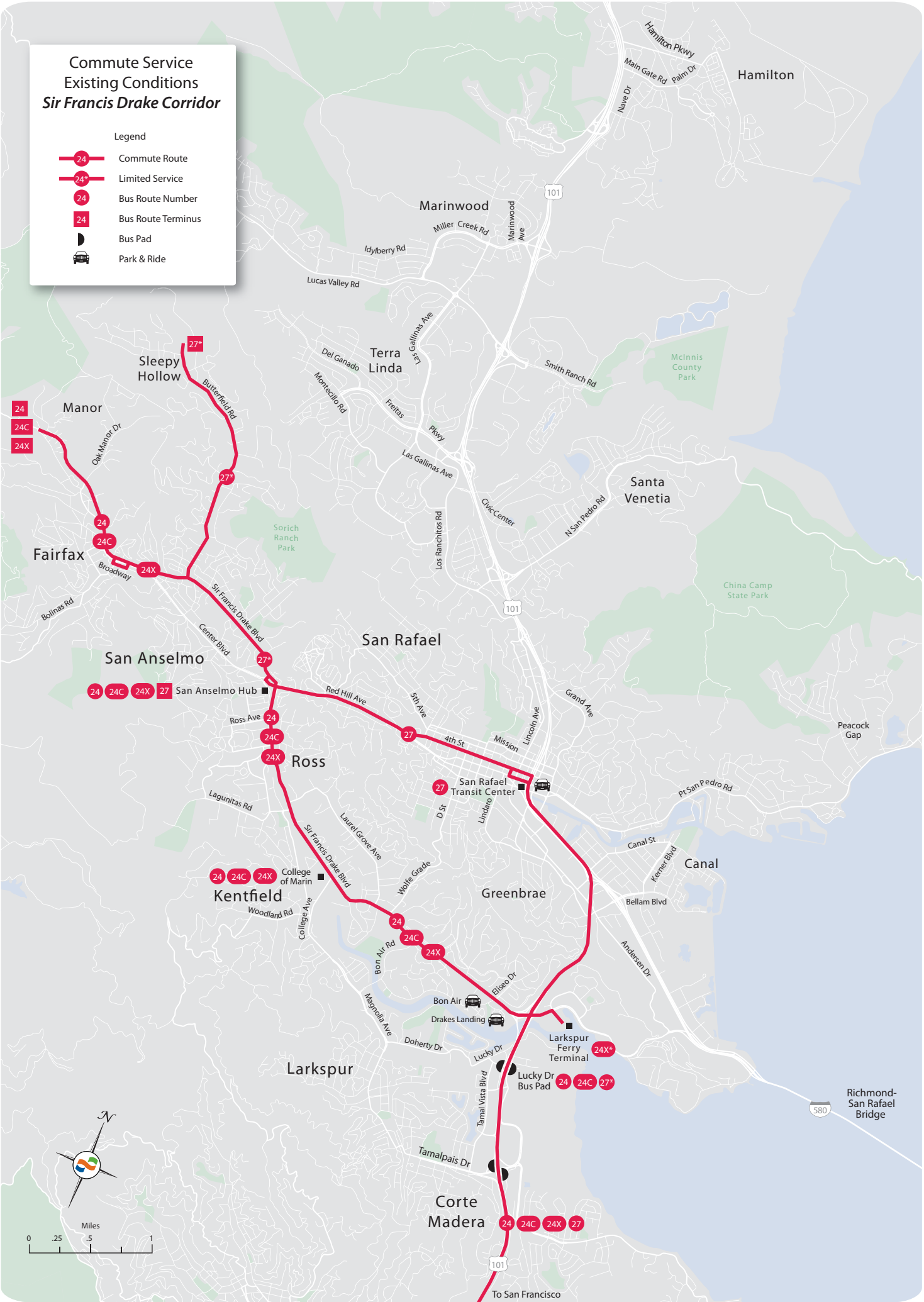
-  Commute Route
-  Bus Route Number
-  Bus Route Terminus
-  Bus Pad
-  Park & Ride



**Commute Service
Existing Conditions
Sir Francis Drake Corridor**








Legend

-  Commute Route
-  Limited Service
-  Bus Route Number
-  Bus Route Terminus
-  Bus Pad
-  Park & Ride



December 2019 Service Change Proposal Sir Francis Drake Corridor

Legend

-  Commute Route
-  Limited Service
-  Express (No Stops)
-  Bus Route Number
-  Bus Route Terminus
-  Bus Pad
-  Park & Ride

