

Chapter 1

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TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) acts as the countywide planning and programming agency for transportation related issues. Be it funding for buses, project oversight for Highway 101 or planning for future passenger rail, the SCTA plays a leading role.

The SCTA has various legal and administrative requirements to fulfill in the capacity of a countywide transportation agency – some of these requirements are derived from regional agencies such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, while others come directly from the state or federal governments.

The *2001 Countywide Transportation Plan for Sonoma County* is the latest countywide planning document approved by the SCTA. The purpose of the plan is primarily to update past transportation planning efforts in order to prioritize transportation needs throughout Sonoma County.

The importance of maintaining an updated planning document is two-fold. First, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission requires local transportation authorities such as the SCTA to establish transportation plans that can feed into the larger Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is a federally required, 25-year planning document. Second, the SCTA is responsible for programming numerous state and federal funding sources to transportation projects. In order to meet this requirement, the SCTA needs a policy and planning document to help guide the programming process. If the SCTA does not meet these two requirements it is at risk of losing critical transportation dollars.

The *2001 Plan* is a multi-modal plan that incorporates past efforts such as the *1995 Congestion Management Plan*, the *Sonoma/Marin Multi-Modal Transportation and Land Use Study*, and the *Sonoma County Transportation Authority's Getting Around Sonoma County in 2020...A Vision for Our Future*. The *2001 Plan* is also built on the efforts of local elected officials and staff from the cities and the County of Sonoma.

Mission Statement

As a collaborative agency of the cities and County of Sonoma, we work together to maintain and improve our transportation network. We do so by prioritizing, coordinating, and maximizing the funding available to us and by providing comprehensive, countywide planning. Our deliberations and decisions recognize the diverse needs within our county and the environmental and economic aspects of transportation planning.

Overall, the *2001 Plan* is meant to refine the vision, goals, and objectives for improving mobility on Sonoma County's streets, highways, transit system and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. To that end, the *2001 Plan* provides policy guidance and specific transportation improvements for development over the next 25 years.

SONOMA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

The Sonoma County Transportation Authority, SCTA, was formed as a result of legislation passed in 1990. Proposition 111 resulted in changes to the way transportation projects are planned and funded. This led to the formation of Congestion Management Agencies for most of the counties in the State. In November 1990, the SCTA was formed under the Local Transportation Authority and Improvement Act (Public Utilities Code Section 180000) and designated as the Congestion Management Agency for Sonoma County. In 1997, the SCTA relinquished its position as the CMA under new state legislation that made this function optional. The SCTA now serves as the coordinating and advocacy agency for transportation funding for Sonoma County.

Membership of the SCTA

The SCTA is governed by a twelve member Board of Directors. Nine of these members are chosen from the Councils of the nine incorporated cities or towns, the remaining three are chosen from the County Board of Supervisors. Officers are elected annually. The Authority holds public meetings on the second Monday (except holidays) of each month at the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department hearing room in Santa Rosa.

The SCTA is staffed by an Executive Director, a planner and an administrative assistant. Staff provides the Board with agendas, staff reports and minutes of meetings. In addition, Staff is responsible for preparing the policy and public information documents of the SCTA.

Function

The SCTA performs several important functions in the local and regional transportation arenas. The three major responsibilities of the SCTA are:

- Programming Transportation Funds
- Coordinating Transportation Funds and Projects Among Jurisdictions (Local/Regional/ State/Federal)
- Preparing and Implementing the Countywide Transportation Plan

Programming Transportation Funds

The SCTA is responsible for programming most of the state and federal funds available to Sonoma County for roadway, transit and bicycle projects. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5- Implementation and Funding. The SCTA ensures that these funds are granted and used properly in Sonoma County and assumes responsibility for assisting local jurisdictions in their applications for funds.

Coordinating Transportation Funds and Projects Among Jurisdictions (Local/ Regional/ State/Federal)

The SCTA coordinates the activities of local jurisdictions with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (the regional transportation agency) and Caltrans. As coordinator, the SCTA provides a forum for discussions among local and regional jurisdictions on transportation, congestion management and project delivery



Preparing and Implementing the County-wide Transportation Plan

In June 1997, the SCTA completed an interjurisdictional study of transportation and land use entitled, *Sonoma/Marin Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study*. The eighteen month long study provided information on the Highway 101/Northwestern Pacific Corridor and resulted in a list of projects aimed at reducing congestion within this corridor. The *Sonoma/Marin Study* was the basis for a proposed sales tax initiative that appeared on the November 1998 ballot and in a different form in the March 2000 ballot.

The *2001 Plan* is representative of the long range planning and programming function of the SCTA.

SCTA Committees

The SCTA also has the responsibility, through its committees, for reviewing and updating the Unmet Transit Needs Plan, reviewing and prioritizing TDA Article 3 Bicycle and Pedestrian projects, and reviewing and adopting the Coordinated TDA/STA Claim. The following standing Committees advise and give input into various issues for the SCTA:

- Technical Advisory Committee
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Countywide Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Paratransit Coordinating Committee

The primary function of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is to advise the SCTA on all technical matters. It is composed of Public Works Directors, Planning Directors and Transit Operators from each jurisdiction in Sonoma County. It also includes representatives from Caltrans, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the North Coast Air Quality District, and the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is composed of fifteen members from specified interest groups and five members from the public-at-large. The primary function of the CAC is to review projects, policy statements and decisions, funding programs, and any other policy matter acted on by the SCTA and to provide input and recommendations for the SCTA's decision making process. The CAC has also been active in promoting Countywide planning and has worked to develop the *2001 Plan*.

The Countywide Bicycle Advisory Committee (CBAC) was formed in July 1993 in response to MTC Resolution No. 875. The CBAC advises the SCTA on programming decisions for bicycle funds (TDA Article 3 funds) and aides in project coordination. The CBAC developed a Countywide Bicycle Plan that is available on line at <http://www.sonoma-county.org/scta>.

The Paratransit Coordinating Committee (PCC) is composed of one potential transit user over 60 years of age, one who is disabled, two representing local social service providers for seniors, two representing social service providers for disabled persons, one representative from each fixed route public transit operator within the county, and a local transportation agency. Each City or Town Council also appoints one representative. The PCC assists the SCTA in making funding decisions regarding paratransit and transit programs throughout the county. The PCC reviews the Unmet Transit Needs Plan and makes recommendations for allocating Section 5310 funds.