

Transit Service

Bus Service

Since the late 1970's, public transportation services in Sonoma County have been expanded in an effort to provide a viable alternative to the private automobile. In recent years, however, funding constraints have resulted in fewer expansions of bus service. The passenger rail project is proceeding, but requires a local funding source to be completed.



Fixed-route service has remained relatively steady, with few increases or decreases in recent years. Attention has shifted to expansion of paratransit services in order to meet needs of the rapidly growing population of disabled and elderly transit riders.

The Transit TAC, a subcommittee of the Technical Advisory Committee reviews and discusses the Coordinated Claim each year. The Claim shows the funding and operational agreements between the transit operators in the county. The Transit TAC also addresses countywide transit coordination in scheduling and public outreach.

A Vision for Bus Service in Sonoma County

- Buses are coordinated, with passengers able to transfer easily and conveniently.
- The needs of elderly people, non-drivers, people with disabilities, commuters and students are well served.
- There are seamless links with passenger rail.
- Travel throughout the County is easy and convenient.
- Nontraditional vehicles (vans, trolleys), may be used when appropriate.
- Connections are made between bike lanes / paths and bus service.
- Bus service is safe and inviting.

Objectives:

- ▶ Improve east Petaluma and inter-city transit service. (North/South subarea)
- ▶ Increase the number of transit trips. (North/South subarea, West subarea)
- ▶ Improve access to and overall circulation at the Charles M. Schultz Regional Airport. (North/South subarea)
- ▶ Expand bus transit service between Santa Rosa and Cloverdale. (North/South subarea)
- ▶ Increase and enhance transit service as follows: (Southeast subarea)
 - ▶ On route 30 for students
 - ▶ Reinstate weekend service on route 40 between Petaluma and Sonoma
 - ▶ Improve transit service to Napa County
 - ▶ Provide feeder bus service to rail
- ▶ Ensure the transportation system operates during emergency flood conditions. (West subarea)
- ▶ Enhance Express Bus service. (Golden Gate regional subarea)
- ▶ Enhance existing bus transit services. (all subareas)
- ▶ Provide facilities to allow functional transfers between modes. (all subareas)

Fixed-route Service:

Fixed-route transit refers to transit service that operates on a specific route, without deviations, according to a fixed daily schedule. Local fixed-route services operate within every city. Intercity service is provided by Sonoma County Transit while service to Marin and San Francisco is provided by Golden Gate Transit.

Overall ridership in Sonoma County has increased over the years at a modest rate. In fiscal year 2003 Santa Rosa CityBus provided 2.6 million rides. Sonoma County Transit provided 1.48 million rides and 183,000 rides were taken on Petaluma Transit. Most operators run regular daytime hours, with some weekend services available. Please contact specific operators for more information regarding routes, fares, and specific schedules.

Coordination:

Santa Rosa CityBus and Sonoma County Transit allow free transfers between each system. In addition, a collaborative fare program called the “SuperPass” gives people access to all of Sonoma County’s transit systems including; Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus, Golden Gate Transit, Petaluma Transit, Healdsburg Transit, and Cloverdale Transit. The SuperPass can be used on any of these transit services in any combination within one month and can be purchased at any of the Transit operators’ headquarters.

| Service Provider | Number of Routes | Number of Buses | Adult fare | Ave Monthly Passengers |
|--|------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Santa Rosa City Bus | 17 | 29 | \$1.00 | 217,000 |
| Sonoma County Transit | 22 | 54 | \$1.05 | 115,205 |
| Petaluma Transit | 3 | 8 | \$0.80 | 17,300 |
| Healdsburg | 1 | 2 | \$1.00 | 1,058 |
| Cloverdale | 1 + on demand | 1 | \$0.75 | 600 |
| Golden Gate Transit (Sonoma County) | 8 | 60 | \$2.20–\$5.30 | 115,665 |

Source: Transit Operators

Paratransit Service:

Paratransit service as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) consists of curb-to-curb public transportation for the disabled population. As the population in Sonoma County continues to grow, the number of people needing these services will follow that trend. By the year 2020 the number of people between the ages of 65 and 79 is estimated to be more than double that of the 2000 population projections within that age group.

Sonoma County Transit and City of Santa Rosa each provide (on average) over 2,000 paratransit trips a month. The demand for paratransit services is already high, and there are strong indications that this need will continue to grow.

Bus System needs

One of the most important steps in updating the CTP was developing a list of priority projects and concerns. This section identifies the long-range transportation needs for each of the transit systems within Sonoma County.

This transit plan for the next 25 years includes operations and capital to maintain and to expand service. The cost to expand service to late evenings requires the capital cost of bus purchase, the operating cost (estimated at \$1 million annually for Santa Rosa) and corresponding paratransit expansion costs.

Currently, operating costs are at approximately \$5.75 million annually for Santa Rosa, Petaluma requires \$1.26 million and Sonoma County Transit estimates an average of \$10 million in operating expenses over the next 10 years. The biggest challenge in increasing service is the operations costs. Santa Rosa anticipates that extending service to nights and weekends would cost the city nearly \$2 million. Petaluma is planning on an increase of \$400,000. The County has a plan of phased increases as routes are added or expanded. Those costs are indicated below.

Capital Needs Project List

SONOMA COUNTY TRANSIT

| Fixed-Route Capital Replacement Costs: | | |
|--|--|----------------|
| FY 2006 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$7,118,000 |
| FY 2009 | 35' Natural Gas Bus Replacement | \$450,000 |
| FY 2011 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$4,000,000 |
| FY 2012 | 25' Mini-bus Replacements | \$540,000 |
| FY 2013 | 30' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$2,500,000 |
| FY 2014 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$4,400,000 |
| FY 2017 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$5,200,000 |
| FY 2018 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$11,179,000 |
| FY 2021 | 35' Natural Gas Bus Replacement | \$700,000 |
| FY 2023 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$6,710,000 |
| FY 2024 | 25' Mini-Bus Replacements | \$890,000 |
| FY 2025 | 30' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$3,600,000 |
| FY 2026 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$6,157,000 |
| FY 2029 | 40' Natural Gas Bus Replacements | \$7,000,000 |
| Total: Fixed-Route Capital Replacement Costs: | | \$60,444,000 |
| Paratransit Capital Replacement Costs: | | |
| FY 2004–2007 | Paratransit Vehicle Replacements | \$1,233,350 |
| FY 2010–2015 | Paratransit Vehicle Replacements | \$3,795,000 |
| FY 2016–2021 | Paratransit Vehicle Replacements | \$3,300,000 |
| FY 2022–2025 | Paratransit Vehicle Replacements | \$2,780,000 |
| FY 2028–2029 | Paratransit Vehicle Replacements | \$2,700,000 |
| Total: | Paratransit Capital Replacement Costs: | \$13,808,350 |
| Fixed-Route & Paratransit Capital Replacements | | = \$74,252,350 |

Capital Needs Project List (continued)

Sonoma County Transit

| Fixed-Route Capital Expansion Costs: | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|
| Phase I | New Route 52 Service to Napa | \$90,000 |
| Phase II | Expand Local Transit Service | \$2,200,000 |
| Phase III | New Feeder Service for Rail | \$1,000,000 |
| Total: | | \$3,290,000 |
| Paratransit Capital Expansion Costs: | | |
| FY 2004 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$139,450 |
| FY 2005 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$150,000 |
| FY 2006 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$20,000 |
| FY 2007 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$80,000 |
| FY 2010 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$90,000 |
| FY 2011 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$90,000 |
| FY 2012 | Paratransiti Fleet Expansion | \$180,000 |
| Total: | | \$749,450 |
| Fixed-Route & Paratransit Capital Expansions | = | \$4,039,450 |
| Transit Support Vehicle Costs – Various Years | = | \$510,672 |
| Bus Maintenance Facility Costs – Various Years | = | \$2,823,163 |
| Park & Ride/Intermodal Facility Costs – Various Years | = | \$9,190,418 |
| ANNUAL OPERATIONS (Average FY 2004 – 2013 Only) | = | \$10,000,000 |

Petaluma Transit

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------|
| 2001& 2013 | New Bus Purchases | \$8,000,000 |
| | Increase Transit Facilities – Various Locations in Petaluma | \$600,000 |
| | Feeder Service to Railroad/Park and Ride | \$150,000/yr |
| capital replacement costs | | \$8,000,000 |
| capital expansion costs | | \$600,000 |

Capital Needs Project List *(continued)*

Santa Rosa Transit

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 2002, 2005, 2008 | Paratransit Fleet Expansion | \$1,080,000 |
| 2004 | Paratransit Fleet Replacement | \$300,000 |
| 2010 | Paratransit Fleet Replacement | \$390,000 |
| 2016 | Paratransit Fleet Replacement | \$510,000 |
| various years | Transit Transfer Facilities | \$8,000,000 |
| 2002/03 | Bus Maintenance Facility Expansion | \$2,625,000 |
| 2004 | New Routes to Growing Areas of Santa Rosa | \$1,077,000 |
| 2010 | Replacement Bus Fleet | \$9,100,000 |
| 2022 | Replacement Bus Fleet | 13,000,000 |
| 2003 | 5 Expansion Buses | \$1,375,000 |
| capital replacement costs | | \$31,650,000 |
| capital expansion costs | | \$5,077,000 |

Golden Gate Transit

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------|
| | Port Sonoma Ferry service | \$25,000,000 |
| | Rehab yard in Sonoma County | TBD |

RAIL



Vision for Rail:

- Commuter rail service is available to people living and working in Marin and Sonoma Counties.
- Freight service – taking trucks off the highway – is one part of a link that extends from Eureka to the Central Valley.
- Excursion service runs on historical trains.

Objectives

- ▶ Design, implement and operate an effective, efficient and convenient passenger and freight rail system that does the following: (all subareas)
 - ▶ Serve commuters and tourists
 - ▶ Provide freight service
 - ▶ Ensure siting and design of all rail stations in consistent for the whole system
 - ▶ Coordinate good links to and facilities for other modes.
 - ▶ Ensure safety by improving rail crossings and seek funds for grade separations
- ▶ Improve rail crossings and seek funds for grade separations. (North/South subarea, Southeast sub area)
- ▶ Create functional access to rail. (North/South subarea)
- ▶ Reduce truck traffic on local streets and roads. Emphasize highway and rail for movement of goods. (all subareas)

We are extremely lucky in Sonoma County to have a railroad right-of-way that is owned by the public. It is our responsibility to ensure that this resource is used in a way that is economical, efficient and meets the greatest needs. We see commute, freight and tourism services creating a symbiotic relationship that will ensure a solid economic base for the system, as well as meeting a number of different needs.

Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit District

In January 2003, the Legislature established the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District. The new district took over the responsibilities of the former Sonoma/Marin Area Rail Transit Commission and the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Authority(NWPRA). The new rail district is responsible for all planning, implementation and operation of passenger rail services along the publicly held Northwestern Pacific (NWP) right of way, from Healdsburg to Corte Madera. The SMART District was also

designated as the owner of the NWP right of way. In March, 2004 SMART took title to NWPRA's right of way from Healdsburg to Novato. Negotiations are on-going with the Golden Gate Bridge District to take over the NWP title from Novato to Corte Madera.

SMART is currently preparing a full Alternatives Analysis, Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement for a 75 mile passenger rail corridor extending from Cloverdale to a San Francisco bound ferry terminal in Marin County. Fifteen stations are under study, along with a proposed maintenance facility, a continuous north-south Class I pedestrian/bike facility and transit oriented development adjacent to rail stations.

The proposed operating plan includes peak period service, operating at 30 minute headways, with one mid day train. The diesel multiple unit (DMU) vehicle is proposed as the preferred vehicle and is compatible with freight use based on Federal Railroad Administration requirements.

Detailed preliminary engineering cost estimates will be released in June, 2004. At the time of this draft, SMART's planning cost estimate is \$220-280 million, depending upon the ferry terminal station selected. Operating costs are estimated at \$9-11 million per year. Fare revenue will help reduce those costs annually and are currently estimated at \$3-4 million per year.

Funding for the project currently assumes \$28 million in Prop 116 funds, \$35 million in Regional Measure 2 funds, \$37 million in Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding, and \$2.5 million in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) station construction funding. The SMART Board is also considering placing a district wide sales tax measure on an upcoming ballot for both construction and operating costs of the system.

| RAIL | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|
| | Project | Cost |
| | Passenger Rail capital - Cloverdale to Marin Ferry Terminal Station | \$220-280million |
| | Passenger Rail - Average annual operating | \$9-11 million/year |
| | | |

Freight Service

Development of a viable freight service isn't just a county issue. In order to get long-haul traffic on the rail line, we must look at a larger area. Currently, the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) is implementing a program to rehabilitate the right of way to meet minimum standards for freight and passenger excursion service from the national rail interchange near Napa (Lombard) to Willits. NCRA hopes to have the rail and bridge repairs complete and the resumption of freight service on this 142-mile section of track by autumn 2004 or early 2005. Simultaneously, NCRA will begin environmental work north of Willits with the goal of freight service all the way to Arcata by 2006.

Increasing the freight traffic on the rail line will result in fewer trucks on the highway. One analysis estimates that 3,000 trucks a week could be taken off of Highway 101 if we had a fully operational freight system.

Excursion Service

As the owner of the NWP, the SMART Board has expressed an interest in considering future excursion service along the corridor. Although no detailed planning or environmental clearance for this type of service has yet begun, excursion service is envisioned as an opportunity to utilize the NWP capital investment to the economic advantage of both SMART and Sonoma County's tourism and agriculture interests.

Ferry Transportation

Utilizing waterways will allow Sonoma County commuters, recreational users and travelers to get to their destination quickly and efficiently. Whether it's to a sporting event, the museum or the airport, ferries will become an excellent alternative for people. As part of our seamless transportation system, it is critical that ferry service be linked to rail, bus and multi-use paths, and provide adequate parking.

Ferry service linked to train service will also provide tourism opportunities for our local economy. People visiting - or those just wanting a wine country weekend getaway - will be able to incorporate water transit as part of their tourist experience.

The State Legislature has created the Bay Area Water Transit Authority to plan future ferry expansion, and Port Sonoma has been included in their studies.