

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) acts as the countywide planning and programming agency for transportation related issues. The SCTA plays a leading role in transportation by securing funds, providing project oversight, and initiating long term planning.

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 and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, while others, come directly from the state, or federal government.

The 2009 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2009 CTP) is the latest countywide planning document approved by the SCTA. It is updated every four years. The purpose of the Plan is primarily to update past transportation planning efforts in order to prioritize transportation needs throughout Sonoma County for the next 25 years.

The importance of maintaining an updated planning document is two-fold. First, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) 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 2009 CTP is a multi-modal plan that updates the 2004 Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Sonoma County and incorporates recent feedback from the public. The public outreach strategy included a countywide poll, six community meetings and a variety of topic specific focus groups and interviews. For more information on the public outreach please see the Public Outreach Report in Appendix B.

The 2009 CTP builds on the efforts of local elected officials and staff from the cities and the County of Sonoma. This update is developed with the understanding that existing transportation funding is inadequate, there is increasing pressure on the existing system, and the impacts on the environment, public health, and safety are growing. A new component

included in the 2009 CTP addresses greenhouse gas emissions and how long range planning for transportation must address emissions reduction in order to meet AB32 and other emission targets.

Overall, the 2009 CTP is meant to refine the goals, objectives, and policies for improving mobility on Sonoma County's streets, highways, and transit system and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, as well as to reduce transportation related impacts. To that end, it provides policy guidance and identifies transportation improvements for development over the next 25 years.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The 2009 CTP is structured to tell the story of Sonoma County's transportation system: its current state, future goals options for the future and how to fund the needs. The 2009 CTP is backed up by numerous appendices that address technical subjects and research on various transportation related topics.

Chapter 2 describes the existing transportation conditions in Sonoma County, including geography, changing demographics of the population, land use and development trends. The existing major transit services are described here, including an overview of paratransit services for the elderly/disabled; proposed future rail services; the highway system, including measures of existing congestion and pavement condition; the recently updated countywide bicycle and pedestrian master plan; air transportation in the county; and the overall system management and operation (for example, intermodal terminals).

Chapter 3 discusses existing and proposed funding sources for transportation in Sonoma County, including federal, state, and local sources. It also notes some potential future funding sources to help pay for the plan.

Chapter 4 describes the transportation system goals, objectives, and policies that were developed for the 2009 CTP Update. They were developed after public

meetings and are based on input from both the Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee. One of the new features of the 2009 CTP is the emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, especially carbon dioxide (CO₂). This plan emphasizes CO₂ reduction because transportation is the leading cause of CO₂ emissions in the County, but plays a relatively minor role in the production of other GHGs. The Sonoma County travel demand model (SCTM 07) was used to test a variety of transportation scenarios, providing quantitative analysis of proposed solutions.

The Appendices following Chapter 4 provide more detailed information for the interested reader on transit services, GHG related issues, the relationship between transportation and land use, planning for safety and for a healthy Sonoma County. Major model assumptions are included in the Appendix, as well as a list of a list of the projects proposed by cities and the County for the plan.

Finally, because transportation planning is complicated and involves the use of many abbreviations, a glossary is provided at the end of the document. The first use of any abbreviation is also spelled out in the document.

NEW INITIATIVES

Since the last CTP update in 2004 the SCTA has implemented 3 major initiatives that bolster our long range planning and foster project delivery.

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The SCTA recently completed a major update to the 2004 Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This is an important document that represents a countywide process of identifying challenges and needs for non-motorized transportation. This information has been incorporated into the Bicycle section of the 2009 CTP.



2. Enhanced Modeling

As part of the 2009 CTP the SCTA's travel demand model has been enhanced and provides greater sensitivity to alternative modes of travel.

3. Traffic Relief Act for Sonoma County—Measure M

Passed by the voters in November 2004, the Traffic Relief Act for Sonoma County (Measure M) provides direct funding for multi-modal transportation throughout the county. Measure M assesses a ¼ cent sales tax to be used to maintain local streets, fix potholes, widen Highway 101, improve interchanges, restore and enhance transit, support development of passenger rail, and build safe bicycle and pedestrian routes. The funds are dedicated towards the specific programs and projects specified in the Traffic Relief Act and the 2007 Strategic Plan.

Measure M provided Sonoma County and its nine cities with a new and reliable fund source for on-going local street maintenance and public transit opera-

tional needs. This increase in funding is starting to show significant benefits, as local jurisdictions have increased spending on local road maintenance projects that have improved the quality of roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

The infusion of transit funding from Measure M is enabling transit needs to be met by maintaining and expanding local bus and paratransit operations by the county's four transit operators even as State funds are dwindling. The Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District continues to work towards the completing the initial steps necessary to bring passenger rail to Sonoma County.

The Highway 101 program showed how a local fund source can be leveraged to increase other funding, when SCTA competitively received \$238.4 Million of State Infrastructure Bond funding for Highway 101 congestion relief. Measure M continues to fund project development efforts on four major Highway 101 projects in Sonoma County that are now fully funded through construction.

Local jurisdictions have also used Measure M to help fund various phases of local street and bicycle/pedestrian projects identified in the Expenditure Plan. Although some funding has been spent on construction, most projects are still working towards environmental compliance and preliminary design. Moving forward with these activities will help create other funding opportunities as sponsor's work towards finalizing funding plans.

The Citizens Advisory Committee established under the original ordinance that





created the SCTA serves as an independent oversight body to advise the SCTA on the administration of the Traffic Relief Act for Sonoma County and report to the public via annual audits of the Act.

Overall, Measure M has been a key component of a transportation strategy that is leading to better quality and safer roads; reduced congestion; and increased transit, bike, and pedestrian opportunities.

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.

SCTA 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.

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 monthly public meetings of the Board of Directors on the second Monday (except holidays) of each month.

SCTA Committees

The following standing committees advise and give input into various issues for the SCTA:

- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CBPAC)
- Transit and Paratransit Coordinating Committee (TPCC)

The primary function of the 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.

Planning Directors and Transit Operators are also represented in subcommittees. The Planning Advisory Committee and the Transit TAC meet on an ongoing as needed basis.

The CAC is composed of community stakeholders and five members of the public at large, appointed from each supervisorial district. The primary function of the CAC is to oversee implementation of Measure M, review projects, policy statements and decisions, funding programs, and any

other policy matter acted on by the SCTA. The CAC provides input and recommendations for the SCTA's decision making process and has been active in promoting Countywide planning, specifically, the development of this Comprehensive Transportation Plan document.

CAC review of Measure M implementation is intended to provide public oversight and transparency of the project delivery process for the general public.

The CBPAC was formed in July 1993 in response to MTC Resolution No. 875. The CBPAC advises the SCTA on programming decisions for bicycle funds and aides in project coordination. The CBPAC developed a Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that is available on line at www.sctainfo.org.

The TPCC is composed of one potential transit user over 60 years of age, one who is disabled, one representing the Hispanic community, 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 may also appoint one representative. The TPCC assists the SCTA in making funding decisions regarding paratransit and transit programs throughout the county. The TPCC is responsible for making recommendations allocating Section 5310 funds and approval of the Coordinated Claim for Transit.