

Moving Forward 2050

Transportation Needs Assessment Phase One

Community Based Organizations

Overview

Moving Forward 2050 is a transportation plan for a future with cleaner, safer and more efficient options. The SCTA is embarking on the next update of the Sonoma County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) to examine transportation needs and revisit our vision for transportation throughout Sonoma County.

SCTA has improved the level of engagement for this phase of outreach in 2019. Compared to the previous round of engagement in 2015, during the 2040 CTP, staff has focused on collaborating with community-based organizations (CBOs) in order to engage with under-presented groups at existing meetings. This included partnering with CBO staff to conduct meetings in Spanish when needed.

SCTA conducted the first phase of outreach for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in July, August and September 2019. The focus was on working with residents and CBOs to determine transportation needs in Sonoma County. MTC requested that special effort is taken to reach community members who are often under-represented – such as seniors, youth, Latinos, recent immigrants, and other low income or disadvantaged communities.

Staff has worked together with four CBOs to gather feedback directly from under-represented communities: the Center for Wellbeing, Community Action Partnership, the Council on Aging and the North Bay Organizing Project. The team held 12 meetings across Sonoma County with 110 attendees. In addition, SCTA staff has released a survey to gauge transportation needs, with over 235 responses received to date.

Phases 2 & 3 will reach beyond under-represented communities to the community at large as well as specific groups, including employers. See Outreach Phase 2 for more details.

Goals

The goals of the CTP outreach are:

- Provide multiple channels for a broad number of communities and stakeholders to provide input on transportation needs and potential projects to be included in the plan.
- Work towards broad consensus as to what the problems are related to transportation and transit in disadvantaged communities and what the best solutions to these problems are.
- Involve residents and community organizations in analyzing and shaping the recommendations in the plan.

Communities highlighted for additional outreach:

- Latinos
- Recent immigrants
- Seniors
- Families
- Indigenous communities
- Youth
- Low income and disadvantaged communities

Activities

SCTA staff and partner organizations held many in-person meetings in order to solicit feedback directly from community members. These include:

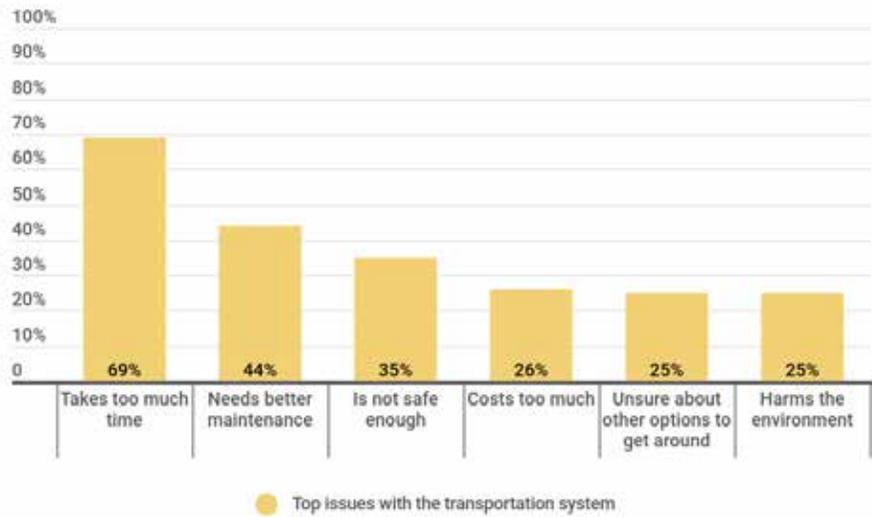
Events	Location	Date
Community Health Worker Meeting	Santa Rosa	7/18/2019
Roseland Community Building Initiative meeting	Roseland	7/25/2019
Youth Civic Engagement Project leadership team	Santa Rosa	7/25/2019
SCTA Citizen’s Advisory Committee	Santa Rosa	7/29/2019
Southwest Santa Rosa Health Action Chapter	Santa Rosa	8/7/2019
Chatino community - house meeting	Petaluma	8/10/2019
African American Community Leaders	Santa Rosa	8/15/2019
Council on Aging	Santa Rosa	8/15/2019
Bayer Farm Potluck	Santa Rosa	8/16/2019
Latino Service Providers	Windsor	8/17/2019
Graton Day Labor Center	Graton	8/20/2019
Petaluma Senior Café	Petaluma	8/27/2019
<i>Triqui Indigenous Community</i>	<i>Santa Rosa</i>	<i>8/25/2019</i>

Survey

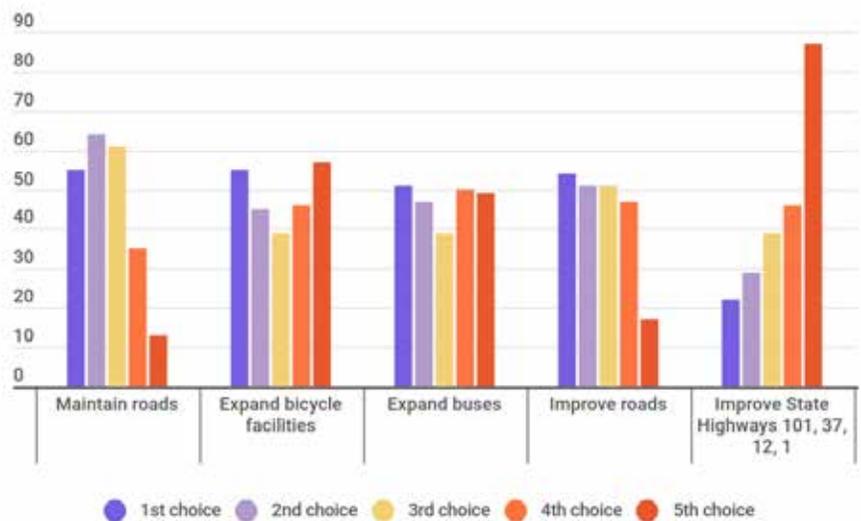
The SCTA released a transportation needs survey on July 31, 2019 and collected responses through September 30, 2019 for this summary. Staff collected responses online, through a Placespeak engagement page as well as through links to the identical survey shared through Typeform. The online survey was available in English and Spanish.

Staff also collected survey results at the 12 listening sessions hosted in English or Spanish by community-based organizations throughout Sonoma County. In total, staff collected roughly 200 responses during the six-week period. The survey remains open for respondents in English: bit.ly/2050CTP and Spanish: bit.ly/2050CTPES

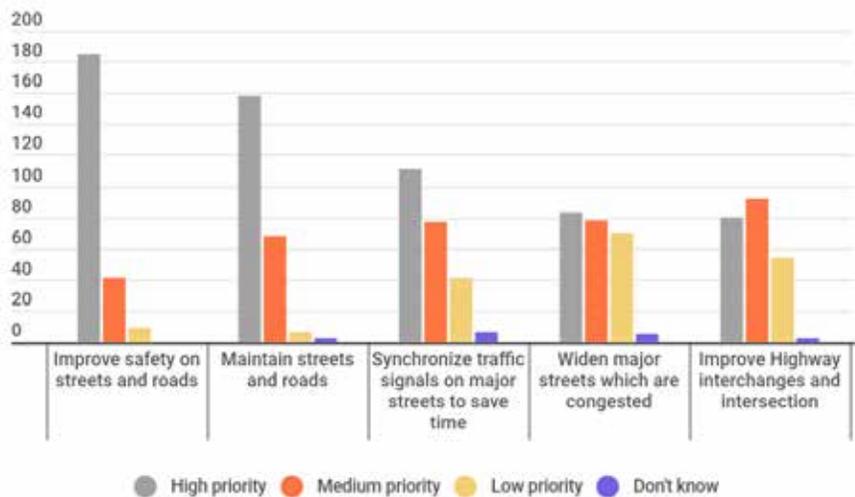
1 - Top concerns with the transportation system



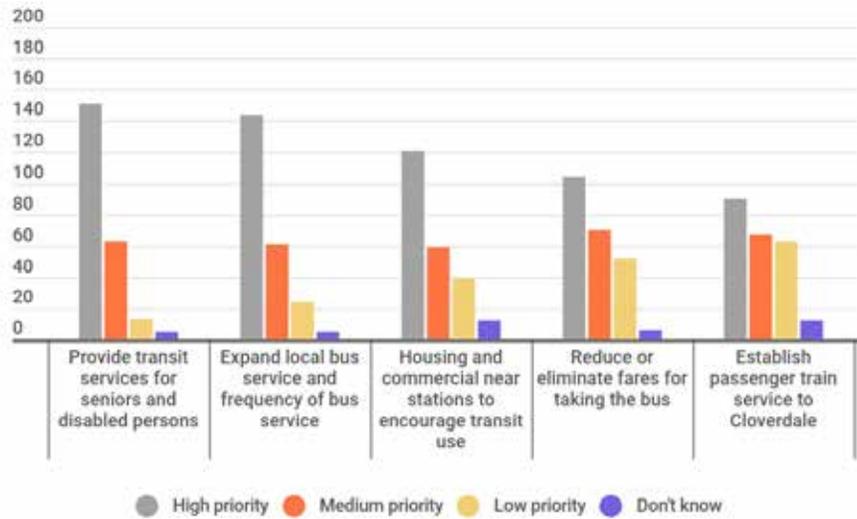
2- Preferred category of improvements



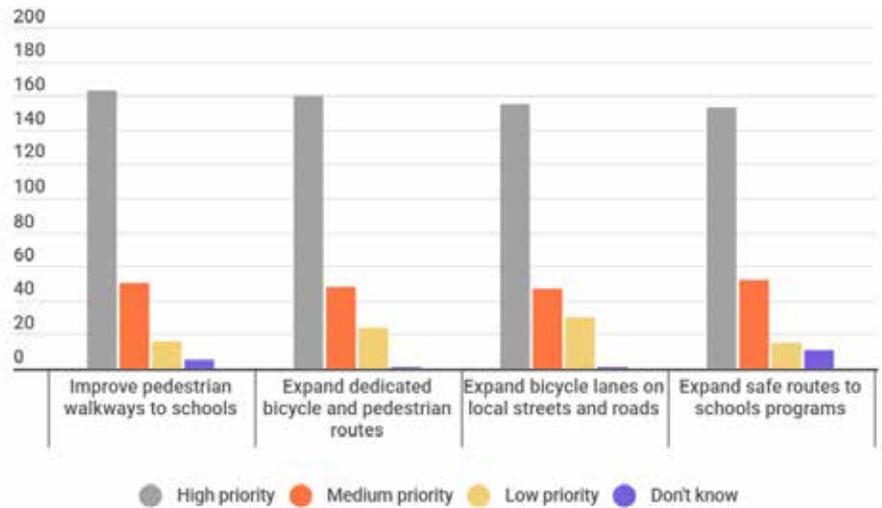
3 - Local Road Priorities



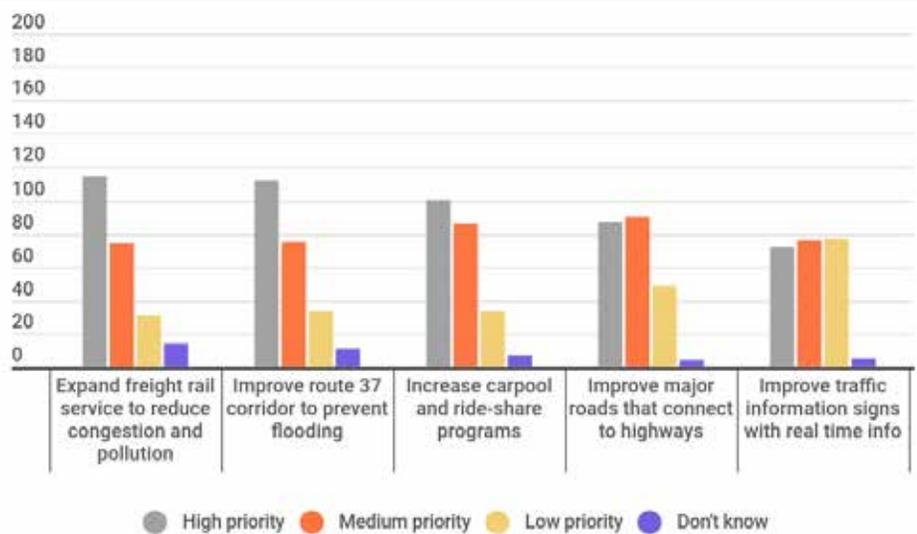
4 - Transit Priorities



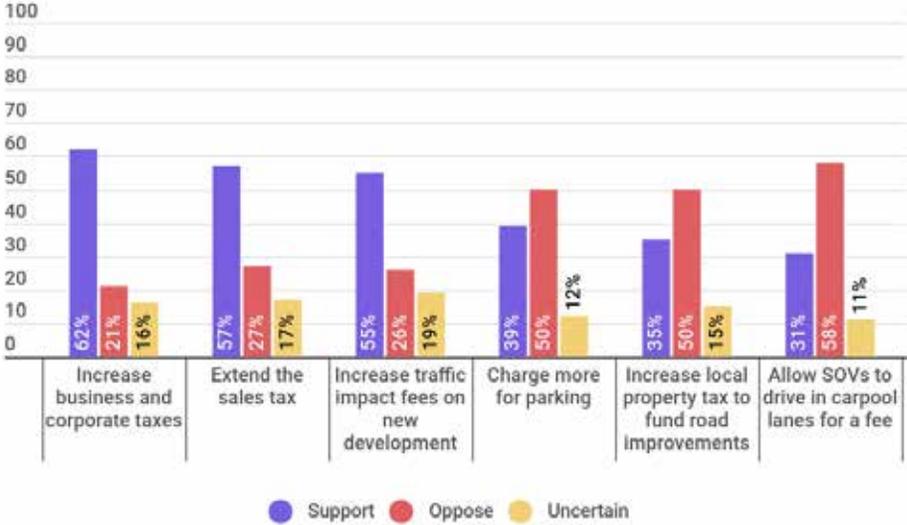
5 - Bicycle & Pedestrian Priorities



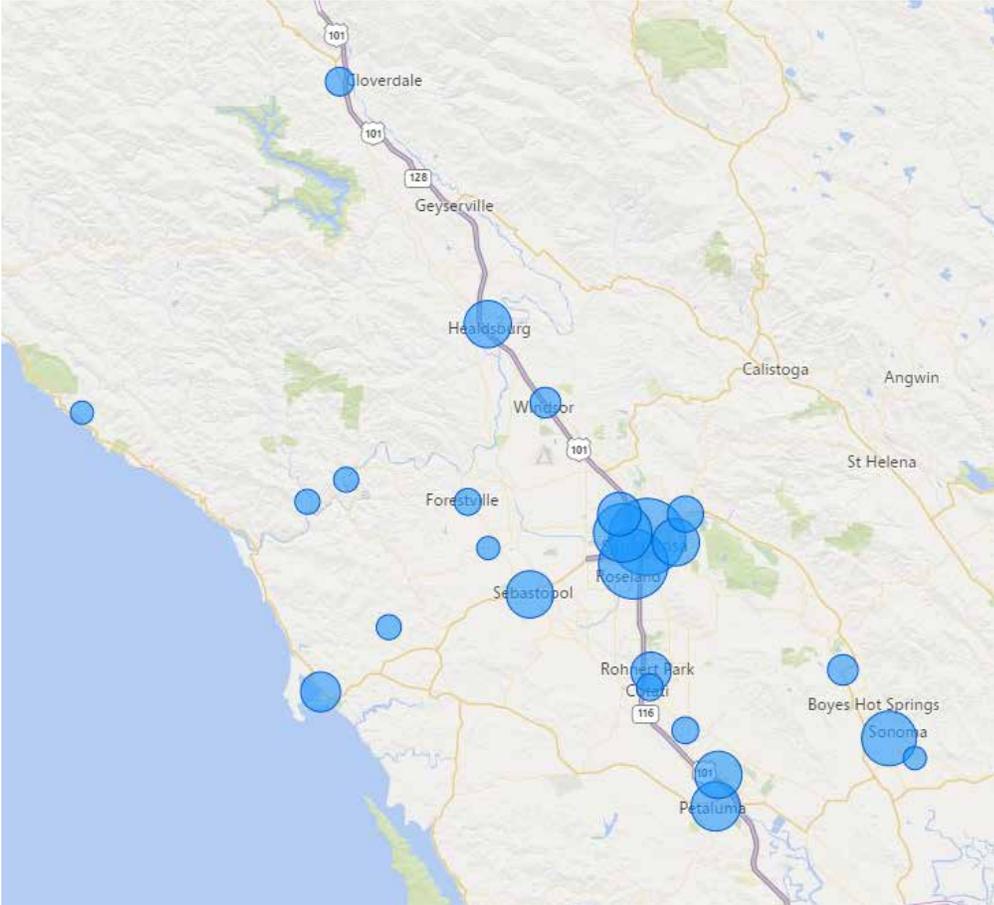
6 - Highway related Priorities



7 - Transportation Funding Options



8 - Map of Survey Responses Received



Survey Discussion

Top transportation issues

Respondents were asked to select their top three transportation issues out of a list of six (see Figure 7). Surveys collected at the meetings conducted by the community based organization to reach under-presented communities in Sonoma County accounted for 35% of the total survey responses. Responses from the CBO meeting group differed from the other respondents in three ways:

- Over three times as likely to say the transportation system costs too much.
- More likely to say the system needs better maintenance.
- More likely to say they were unsure about other options to get around.
- Less like to say that harming the environment was a top issue with the transportation system.

Transportation system improvements

Respondents were asked to rank five categories of transportation system improvements (see Figure 1). When analyzing the highest ranked category by home ZIP code and age, several things stood out:

- Southwest Santa Rosa respondents selected Maintain Roads and Improve Roads to a much higher degree than other areas.
- East Petaluma respondents also selected Maintain Roads to a much higher degree than other areas.
- Sebastopol and West County respondents also selected Improve Roads to a much higher degree than other areas.
- Sonoma Valley respondents selected Expand Buses to a much higher degree than other areas.
- West Petaluma respondents selected Expand Bicycle Facilities to a much higher degree than other areas.
- Respondents aged 45-54 and 55-64 selected Improve Roads and Maintain Roads to a greater degree than other age categories.
- Respondents aged 35-44 selected Expand Bicycle Facilities to a greater degree than other age categories.

Funding

The group of responses from the CBO meetings was significantly less supportive of the options presented to fund transportation improvements (see Figure 6). For example:

- Only 19.3% of respondents from the CBO meetings supported extending the sales tax while 74.2% of the other respondents supported it.
- The highest level of support from the CBO group for a transportation funding option was 45.8% support for increasing business and corporate taxes.

Listening Sessions

The in-person listening sessions and online survey responses covered a wide-ranging number of issues and possible solutions. The main issues are categorized within the transportation issues explored during the listening sessions and online survey:

Cost

Transit should be free for everyone or made available at a reduced cost for youth and elderly – A number of responses addressed the need for reducing the cost of transit by either making transit free for all, or providing significant discounts for youth and older adults. Many responses also noted that the SMART train is too expensive.

“Public transportation is key to environmental protection and to reducing the cost of living that is endangering our economy.” – Cloverdale Resident

“We depend on convenience when we transport ourselves and others to our destinations. The facts are that when I have to wait over an hour for a SMART train, instead I drive. I have to walk a mile with luggage or take Uber from the SMART train airport stop to the Santa Rosa Airport, thus I drive.” – Penngrove Resident

Time

Most everyone uses a car and gets stuck in traffic because there are few other options – Many respondents felt that private automobiles were the only logical choice for making their trips, while also complaining that roads and intersections were unsafe and congested due to the number of other people driving private vehicles.

“Lakeville Hwy and Hwy 37 have become major roads and the increased volume needs to be addressed for safety and time. The condition of most side roads in the county is poor to unsafe.” – Petaluma resident

Round trip transit trips take too much time – Many respondents said they declined to use transit because the trip time was not competitive with driving.

“Buses do not run frequently and are therefore useless unless one has no other option. I’d call Uber before I’d wait an hour for a bus or 1.5 hours for the train.” – Rohnert Park resident

Many older adults do not have the stamina to spend the day taking transit – The length of time required to take a round-trip on transit was a problem for many older adults. People typically outlive their ability to drive by 10 years and respondents indicated that taking transit or paratransit given medication schedules and the amount of time spent out of the house.

Maintenance

Potholes damage cars and make bicycling difficult – A number of respondents complained about damage to their cars and the difficulty of biking due to the state of the roads.

“Our potholes are massive, taking years to get counties attention to fix, not just sloppy patching they do now.” – Bodega Bay resident

Sidewalks and streets need to be better maintained for walking and biking – Many responses pointed out specific roads or sections of a trip where a sidewalk was missing. They also pointed out areas where the road was too narrow to safely accommodate both cars and cyclists.

“Improve walking paths. There are many places without full sidewalks.” – Southeast Santa Rosa resident

Accessibility

Bus drivers don't speak Spanish – Many Spanish-speakers expressed having a difficult time with bus drivers who did not speak Spanish. Many of them felt the drivers grew frustrated when they couldn't communicate.

“There is a significant need for Spanish-speaking bus drivers. All bus drivers should be bilingual and the receptionist at bus station terminals should be bilingual at all times.”

Other transportation information only in English – A number of Spanish speakers expressed hesitancy about using transit and there was rarely and information in Spanish on using the transit system.

“I want a roof at the bus stop to cover me from rain and sun. I want to get my change after paying. That's it. I don't know how to read.” Southeast Santa Rosa resident

Safety

Not enough space on streets reserved for bikes – Many respondents suggested that separated bicycle lanes or paths be constructed to make cyclists feel safer.

“Bicycle lanes should be separated from traffic. The local plan for most bicycle lanes is horrific and accidents are unavoidable.” – Sonoma resident

“I ride my bike regularly to work, about 7.5 miles each way since moving here about a year and a half ago. I was hit by a car Friday morning and now have a broken shoulder (hit and run). I ride safe, observe all traffic laws, have a flashy red light on the back, wear bright clothes. I always thought as long as I obey traffic laws and stay visible I'd be ok. Please give us safer cycling transportation infrastructure.” – Oakmont resident

Lack of lighting around bus stops and frequency of service at night – Many transit riders expressed fear of taking transit at night due to unlit bus stops and long waits that exposed them to cat-calls and unwanted attention.

“Expand bus service earlier in the morning and later at night. Same for rail service on the weekend.” – Rohnert Park resident

Increased Investment

Perceived gap in transportation investments compared to other communities - Many participants highlighted a need to increase the investment in the transportation system with new projects or programs, such as new scooter share or increased highway roadway capacity.

“To encourage more biking, walking, skateboarding, make a program like they have in LA, where you can rent a scooter or bike and return it to any docking location.” – Northeast Santa Rosa resident

Lack of regional public transit routes between counties – Many participants complained that there were few public transit options to travel to neighboring counties or move between communities off of the Highway 101 corridor:

“Why is there no way to get from Sonoma County to Amtrak, BART, or Napa? We need better regional support and an East/West transit plan. There is life beyond the 101 corridor.” – Glen Ellen resident