



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/9/2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Public Infrastructure - Transit Division

Staff Name and Phone Number: Johannes J. Hoevertsz, 707-565-2550

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma County Transit - Accept Sonoma County Transportation Authority's Integrated Transit Plan

Recommended Action:

Executive Summary:

The goal of the Integrated Transit Plan is to assess current services and to develop recommendations that reduce the amount of overlapping service and improve efficiency of transit services provided in Sonoma County. The Plan includes evaluation of local transit services operated by Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus, and Petaluma Transit, as well as regional services operated by Golden Gate Transit and SMART.

The report presents 26 recommendations related to fixed-route, paratransit, and data collection. The plan also identifies areas in the county where implementation of micro-transit service could be successful. Next steps include additional data collection, analysis, and public engagement to confirm whether the recommended service changes will improve current services or if other alternatives should be considered.

Discussion:

In 2018 and 2019, the SCTA, in collaboration with Santa Rosa CityBus, Sonoma County Transit, Petaluma Transit, and MTC, developed the Transit Integration and Efficiency Study (TIES) to examine feasible actions that will improve transit integration and efficiencies. TIES was built on long-standing coordination among the operators and identified strategies that would most effectively improve the passenger experience, reduce operating and capital costs, and better integrate the existing operating systems. Recommendations in TIES include a wide range of actions in several functional areas in a phased approach. The study was limited to the local bus operators as a starting point, with a goal of extending integration activities to the regional transit operators serving Sonoma County (SMART and Golden Gate Transit) in the future. The TIES report was adopted by the SCTA in November 2019, [TIES-Final-Report_11.4.19.pdf \(ca.gov\)](https://scta.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TIES-Final-Report_11.4.19.pdf) <https://scta.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TIES-Final-Report_11.4.19.pdf>.

In May 2020, MTC established the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force to advise the Commission on distribution of federal emergency relief for transit agencies and to develop a Transit Transformation Action Plan to identify actions to deliver a more connected, integrated, and customer-focused transit network in the Bay Area. The Action Plan identifies recommendations in the areas of fare integration, customer information, transit priority on roadways, bus and rail network management changes, service planning, and accessibility. MTC has since developed a Regional Network Manager team and structure to implement the Transit

Transformation Action Plan and is advancing programs in various areas.

In October 2020, the SCTA established the Future of Transit Ad Hoc Committee to revisit and prioritize TIES recommendations given changing conditions resulting from the pandemic and to coordinate efforts with the MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force process. Working with staff from the three local transit systems, the Ad Hoc developed the following goals for the Future of Transit process:

- 1. Increase transit ridership** as a mechanism to reduce GHG emissions, improve access to low-cost transportation, and reduce congestion.
- 2. Simplify and enhance the transit customer experience**, while maximizing resources available to transit and improving operational efficiency and service quality (reliability, frequency, and span of service).
- 3. Meet these outcomes** through a “unified brand” for local transit services in Sonoma County.

To advance these goals, transit agency and SCTA staff developed three phases of activities to build integration and provide the foundation for a future unified brand.

Phase 1 tasks were completed in 2022, including offerings of one-seat rides on paratransit between service areas, a new customer service number that connects to all three bus agencies, customer service cross training, synchronized schedule change dates, common fare free days, and a successful joint funding proposal for a two-year fare free youth program.

Phase 2 included development of the Integrated Transit Plan that conducted a service analysis in overlapping transit corridors with the intent of optimizing transit services through integrated service planning, schedule coordination and market analysis. Additional Phase 2 tasks include common fare policies, simplified and common technology solutions, customer service, public information, and marketing.

The recommended near-term next steps include collecting stop-level ridership and origin-destination data, analysis of the data to refine initial concepts, and conduct public engagement to confirm public support for modifications before implementation.

Several other recommendations contained in the Integrated Transit Plan will be used to refine the work plan for implementation of the Phase 2 Transit Integration work. The operators and SCTA are developing a work plan and a Memorandum of Understanding (between the three local transit operators) for implementation over a multi-year period.

Transit staff will report back to the Board on progress made in implementing the work plan, including any recommended service adjustments, in July 2025.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Acceptance of the report is requested at this time and there is no direct fiscal impact related to this Board Item.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

SCTA Integrated Transit Plan report

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None.