

Go Sonoma Act

Better Transportation for All of Sonoma County

Draft Expenditure Plan

CTP Based Recommendation

Sonoma County Transportation Authority - March 2020

I. EXPENDITURE PLAN SUMMARY

New transportation investment is needed in our community. Without it, we will experience more traffic, increased greenhouse gas emissions and poorly maintained streets that leads to time away from our family and friends, bad air quality, increased costs for car maintenance and impacts to our climate.

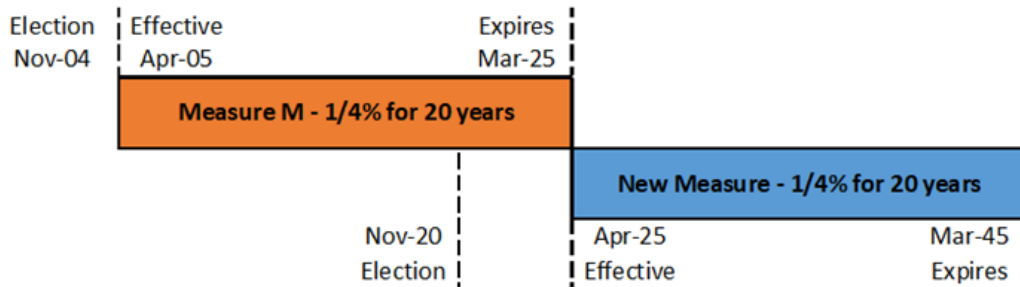
This plan, Go Sonoma, benefits everyone who lives and works in Sonoma County. Through a public process we have developed a plan that shows how we will fix local streets, improve transportation corridors, increase bus transit service, and improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. Without increasing the current tax rate, more than twice as much money will be dedicated to local roads, bus service and bike projects and cannot be taken away for any other purposes.

Sonoma became a self-help county in 2004 when it passed the Traffic Relief Act known as Measure M. In order to maintain our status as a self-help county and deliver critical transportation projects, we need Go Sonoma to be in place now so we can get projects ready and before we lose our standing. As a self-help county with a reliable revenue source the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) leveraged other funding at a ratio of 5:1 to widen the Highway 101 corridor. With a secure local funding source the SCTA has been able to secure highly competitive State and federal funds that would not have been possible without a local commitment that gets projects shovel ready. All projects will have a match requirement of at least 15%.

The new investment plan will include four programs in two categories:

A. Fix roads, fill potholes, improve traffic	
Smooth & maintained roads	38%
Move traffic & improve safety	27%
B. Improve alternatives to cars, fight climate change	
Increase bus service, affordability, & first/last mile connections	23%
Build bikeways & pathways	12%

The Go Sonoma Act will continue, for 20 years, the ¼-cent sales tax currently dedicated to transportation.



II. OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

Go Sonoma is needed now in order to meet our transportation vision and goals and ensure key projects can be planned and built without delays. Since most of the projects identified in Measure M have been completed or are under way, a continuation of a local and reliable source of funding now will result in more matching funds for new improvements coming on line sooner.

VISION:

Connecting people, places and goods as we transition our transportation network to zero-emissions by 2050.

Our guiding principles are to improve safety, equity and quality of life.

GOALS:

Our transportation system should be:

1. Connected and Reliable: Deliver a seamless network that allows people to use a variety of transportation types easily, affordably and dependably.
2. Safe and Well Maintained: Provide safe and well-maintained transportation infrastructure.
3. Community Oriented and Place-Based: Implement place-based (or context sensitive) transportation projects, tailored to urban, suburban and rural communities that will improve local mobility.
4. Zero Emissions: Provide zero-emission transportation opportunities that meet diverse community needs, improve health and enhance quality of life.

III. GO SONOMA ACT EXPENDITURE PLAN

The Go Sonoma Act translates the SCTA goals into investments for specific programs in four program categories. Each program category will receive a percentage share of sales tax revenues, currently estimated at \$26 million annually. The program allocates 1% of the revenue for administration and audits.

BALLOT QUESTION:

Without raising taxes, shall the Sonoma County Transportation Authority implement the Go Sonoma Act to repair potholes; reduce congestion; make biking and walking safer; expand local bus service; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; improve evacuation routes; and enhance transportation services for students and seniors by continuing, for 20 years, the current ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to transportation, providing approximately \$26 million annually?

A. Fix Roads, Fill Potholes, Improve Traffic – 65%

SMOOTH & MAINTAINED ROADS

Fixing potholes and making our roads smooth to drive and ride on is a central focus of the Go Sonoma Act. Approximately \$9.9 million annually (or 38% of the sales tax revenue) will be used by cities and the County to fix existing roads and keep them well maintained. All projects will take into consideration bicycle and pedestrian needs, traffic calming, intelligent transportation system technology, construction methods that reduce emissions, and appropriate safety measures. These components of a road project are eligible for sales tax revenue.

This program will help achieve the transportation system goals of: 1) Connected and Reliable, 2) Safe and Well Maintained, and 3) Community Oriented and Place Based.

Funds for this program will be allocated by a 50% population/50% road mile formula and local governments must maintain their existing commitments of local funds for transportation purposes. Below is a chart that estimates how much each jurisdiction can anticipate receiving annually.

Jurisdiction	Formula	Estimated Annual Sales Tax Funding
	Population / Road Mile Split	
Cloverdale	1.59%	\$157,393
Cotati	1.27%	\$125,580
Healdsburg	2.18%	\$215,865
Petaluma	9.78%	\$966,615
Rohnert Park	6.24%	\$616,221
Santa Rosa	28.15%	\$2,781,097
Sebastopol	1.28%	\$126,852
Sonoma	1.84%	\$181,829
Windsor	4.61%	\$455,837
County	43.04%	\$4,252,710
Total	100%	\$9,880,000

MOVE TRAFFIC & IMPROVE SAFETY

In addition to fixing local roads, the Go Sonoma Act will provide approximately \$7.0 million annually (or 27% of the sales tax revenue) for projects that get traffic moving and improve safety. Moving people and goods around Sonoma County means making changes to our roadway system, providing alternatives and using technology to ensure reliability and safety.

Projects will compete for the funds in this program based on the following criteria:

- Improve the flow of traffic with operational projects such as interchange improvements, traffic signals, turn lanes, or roundabouts
- Use best practices for bikeway design on city streets including pedestrian improvements and transit elements on roadway projects in cities
- Show improvements to safety for travelers of all modes
- Improve connections within and between communities
- Target high traffic areas with right-sized solutions that have regional benefit
- Maximize the movement of people and reduce travel time
- Has clear local support through a resolution of the local governing Board
- Be cost effective and leverage other grants above the required match when possible
- Address resiliency
- Are included in a local general plan and the SCTA's Comprehensive Transportation Plan

All projects will require environmental review, engineering and matching funds before construction can begin. All projects will take into consideration bicycle and pedestrian needs, traffic calming, intelligent transportation system technology and system implementation, and appropriate safety measures.

This program will help achieve the transportation system goals 1) Connected and Reliable, 2) Safe and Well Maintained, and 3) Community Oriented and Place Based

Projects included in Moving Forward 2050, our Comprehensive Transportation Plan, is located here: <link to CTP Measure list of priority road projects>.

B. Improve Alternatives to Cars , Fight Climate Change – 35%.

INCREASE BUS SERVICE, AFFORDABILITY & CONNECTIONS FOR FIRST/LAST MILE

Funding for local transit improvements in the Go Sonoma Act will expand and enhance local bus operations to provide a more reliable service that works for more people. This program includes maintenance of existing bus service, increased bus frequencies and extended hours of operations, and a community benefit program to provide free rides for students and seniors. Increased bus frequencies and extended hours of operations should be prioritized where routes make first and last mile connections to major bus transit hubs, schools and rail stations.

Approximately \$6 million (or 23% of sales tax revenue) annually is dedicated to this program. Of that amount, 3% annually is dedicated to community benefit programs that support first/last mile and commuter programs to be managed by SCTA.

Below is a chart estimating how much each category and each Transit Agency can expect from the measure annually:

Operators	Service Area Population %	Service Continuity* 10%	Service Expansion 8%	Student / Senior Rides up to 2%**
Petaluma Transit	12.43%	\$323,248	\$258,598	Reimbursement of costs
Santa Rosa CityBus	35.08%	\$912,019	\$729,615	Reimbursement of costs
Sonoma County Transit	52.49%	\$1,364,733	\$1,091,787	Reimbursement of costs
	100.00%	\$2,600,000	\$2,080,000	\$520,000

*The 2004 Measure M Bus Service program is now considered existing service but will be continued in the new measure

**Remainder, if any, to be distributed by population formula to Service Expansion

This program will help achieve the transportation system goals 1) Connected and Reliable, 2) Safe and Well Maintained, 3) Community Oriented and Place Based, and 4) Zero Emissions

BUILD BIKEWAYS AND PATHWAYS

This program will better separate bikes from cars and make it easier to bike and walk. It includes building new infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians that will increase overall safety, close critical gaps in existing routes, and promote the use of active transportation through community benefit programs to support safety education and encouragement like Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero. In addition, numerous local road improvement projects will include improved bicycle lanes striping and sidewalk improvements.

Approximately \$3.1 million (or 12% of sales tax revenue) annually is dedicated to this program and will be used for bicycle and/or pedestrian projects that compete based on the criteria below. Of the total annual amount, 1% is dedicated annually to community benefit programs that support safety education and encouragement.

- Demonstrate the potential to shift from cars to active transportation measured by a reduction in vehicle miles traveled
- Use best practices for bikeway design, considering appropriate facilities that maximize use and safety
- Implement safety improvement priorities identified through Vision Zero, a plan to prevent all road deaths and serious injuries
- Design for all ages and abilities

This program will help achieve the transportation system goals 1) Connected and Reliable, 2) Safe and Well Maintained, 3) Community Oriented and Place Based, and 4) Zero Emissions

IV. OVERSIGHT AND ADMINISTRATION

The implementation of the Go Sonoma Act will be the responsibility of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority. The SCTA is composed of twelve elected officials; a representative from each of the nine cities in Sonoma County and three members of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

The SCTA will be responsible for developing and updating a strategic plan to guide allocation decisions. The SCTA will develop the initial strategic plan by December 31, 2023 and prepare and update it at least every five years during the term of the plan.

The Citizens Advisory Committee established under the Ordinance No. 1 that created the SCTA will serve as an independent oversight body that will advise the SCTA on the administration of the Go Sonoma Act and report to the public via annual audits of the Act and annual reports on progress.

The SCTA will work closely and cooperatively with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) on programming state and federal grants to match funding from the Go Sonoma Act for programs and projects. These partnerships will help to maximize the state and federal funds that can be leveraged with a local source of funds and to deliver projects in a timely manner.

V. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The Go Sonoma Act will begin on April 1, 2025 and will end on March 31, 2045.

Environmental reporting, review and approval procedures as provided for under the National Environmental Policy Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, or other applicable laws will be adhered to as a prerequisite to the implementation of any project.

The State of California is leading the nation with a path to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and reverse the growth of vehicle miles travelled. Go Sonoma is designed to boost the ability of jurisdictions to get climate fighting projects funded and meet those objectives for the state.

Use of the retail transactions and use tax under this Transportation Expenditure Plan will be subject to the following restrictions:

1. The tax proceeds must be spent for the purposes of funding the transportation programs and projects as allowed in the Go Sonoma Act and may not be used for other purposes.
2. In accordance with California Public Utilities Code Section 131100, the tax proceeds will be used to supplement, and may not be used to replace, existing local property tax or other local revenues used for transportation purposes.

3. The tax proceeds will be expended in Sonoma County.
4. The SCTA is charged with a fiduciary duty in administering the tax proceeds in accordance with the applicable laws and this Go Sonoma Act. Receipt of tax proceeds may be subject to appropriate terms and conditions as determined by the SCTA in its reasonable discretion, including, but not limited to, the right to require recipients to execute funding agreements and the right to audit recipients' use of the tax proceeds.

Actual tax proceeds may be higher or lower than estimated in this Go Sonoma Act. The Go Sonoma Act expenditure plan is based on the percentage distributions to each Program Category and the dollar values included are estimates only. Actual tax proceeds will be programmed annually in accordance with the percentage distributions in the Go Sonoma Act expenditure plan.

The Sonoma County Transportation Authority will prepare a Strategic Plan prior to December 31, 2023, for review by the SCTA Board and the CAC. It will identify funding prioritization criteria consistent with the goals and objectives of the *2020 Comprehensive Transportation Plan* and the Go Sonoma Act for Sonoma County expenditure plan. The Strategic Plan will include general procedures for project sponsors to initiate a project and identify an implementation schedule and the programming of funds based on successful calls for projects. The Strategic Plan will include the evaluation criteria for prioritization of projects. The Strategic Plan will be updated at least every five years during the life of the Go Sonoma Act.

The SCTA is authorized to bond for the purposes of advancing the commencement of or expediting the delivery of transportation programs or projects. The SCTA may issue limited tax bonds, from time to time, to finance any program or project in the Go Sonoma Act as allowed by applicable law and as approved by the SCTA, and the maximum bonded indebtedness shall not exceed the 20 year amount of proceeds of this retail transactions and use tax, estimated to be \$850 million in 2020 dollars. Such bonds will be payable solely from the proceeds of the retail transactions and use tax and may be issued any time before expiration of the tax.