



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2020-0207, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Transportation and Public Works

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Johannes J. Hoevertsz 707-565-2231

**Vote Requirement:** Informational Only

**Supervisory District(s):** All

**Title:**

**1:00 P.M. - November 2020 Transportation Sales Tax Measure Draft Proposal and List of Projects/Need**, as presented by Sonoma County Transportation Authority

**Recommended Action:**

The information is being presented as an informational item only from a February 10, 2020 Sonoma County Transportation Authority Board of Directors meeting. (Informational Only)

**Executive Summary:**

The Measure M ¼-cent transportation sales tax will expire in 2024. In order to maintain our status as a self-help county and deliver critical transportation projects, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) is considering a sales tax extension for the November 2020 ballot.

**Discussion:**

The SCTA currently manages a ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to a multi-modal expenditure plan known as Measure M. The strawman proposal maintains the ¼-cent tax until removed by voters, eliminates the Highway 101 and the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) programs, and allocates the funds to the other program categories thereby more than doubling the funding that will be available to local roads, bus transit and bike and pedestrian pathways.

If voters do not renew Measure M by 2024, the SCTA and its member jurisdictions will no longer have a local funding source to leverage State and Federal dollars for transportation projects. By putting a measure on the ballot in 2020, the SCTA will be able to fund new projects sooner.

The SCTA Board has been discussing when and how to ask voters to continue support for a local tax for transportation. In March 2019, then Chair Landman formed the Measure M ad hoc committee to help focus the approach. Members of the ad hoc are Chair Susan Gorin and Directors Bagby, Gurney, Landman, Rabbitt and Rogers.

On July 9, 2019, the SCTA issued a call for projects for the *Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2050* asking project sponsors to identify and rank their 10 highest priority projects for consideration in a new tax measure; as well as submit and rank up to 5 transit projects. The result was nearly \$4B in requests ranging from bike safety projects to interchanges across Highway 101 to SMART extension to Cloverdale with increased service.

Based on earlier direction from the SCTA Board, SMART will not be included in the new measure. After removing SMART expansion to Cloverdale, the total need is \$3.57B and breaks down into the following categories:

Call for Measure Projects	Sum of Project Need (\$M)	%
Bicycle and Pedestrian	\$ 397.04	11%
Connecting Communities	\$ 1,086.47	30%
Road Maintenance	\$ 1,500.00	42%
Transit - Bus	\$ 583.06	16%
Grand Total	\$ 3,566.58	100%

In the early fall of 2019, the SCTA hired Muelrath Public Affairs and EMC to help guide and perform an initial poll. EMC conducted the first round of polling in September by surveying 600 likely 2020 voters. The results were positive for a ¼-cent and less optimistic for a ½-cent. The poll asked:

*To reduce traffic congestion on local roads and highways; repair potholes; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; make walking and biking safer; expand local bus service; improve evacuation routes and emergency road access; and enhance transportation for students, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities; shall the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, [Split A: continue the existing ¼ cent sales tax without increasing the rate until ended by voters, providing approximately \$23 million annually / Split B: replace the existing measure with a ½ cent sales tax until ended by voters, providing approximately \$45 million annually], with annual audits and citizen oversight?*

There was very solid support for a ¼-cent with 73% and good support for a ½-cent with 67%. However, when presented with an opposition statement, the support drops to 64% and 58% respectively. After adding in “lean support,” the numbers go to 66% and 59%.

Following the poll, the ad hoc committee reviewed the project lists submitted by each jurisdiction and deliberated on a possible structure for the measure. The ad hoc proposed a strawman that was structured with two “buckets” of project types reflecting the importance of:

- a. Improving the backbone of the transportation system across all modes of road maintenance, active transportation and bus service, and
- b. Connecting communities through infrastructure projects, both big and small, that help people move safely and reliably wherever they need to go.

The SCTA advisory committees reviewed the strawman proposal in late January and early February. In February and March, the SCTA Board took public comment and deliberated on the strawman. The direction to staff was to drop the proposed structure, simplify the content and provide greater detail on the overall expenditure plan. The DRAFT Expenditure Plan is the SCTA staff effort to address these comments and provide a framework for the next round of discussions.

The DRAFT Expenditure Plan includes four programs in two categories. Staff has analyzed the CT divided them into these categories and then applied the program percentage of the total need:

Smooth & maintained roads 38%

Move traffic & improve safety 27%  
B. Improve alternatives to cars, fight climate change - 35%  
Increase bus service, affordability, & first/last mile 23%  
Build bikeways & pathways 12%

Further detail is included in the SCTA Board of Directors April 13, 2020 meeting materials attached to this item.

**Prior Board Actions:**

None

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 19-20 Adopted</b>	<b>FY20-21 Projected</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

None

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None

**Attachments:**

Listed Projects  
SCTA Staff Report to SCTA Board of Directors  
SCTA Draft Expenditure Plan  
SCTA New Transportation Measure, Draft

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

None