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SONOMA COUNTY INTEGRATED TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

Presentation to Santa Rosa City Council

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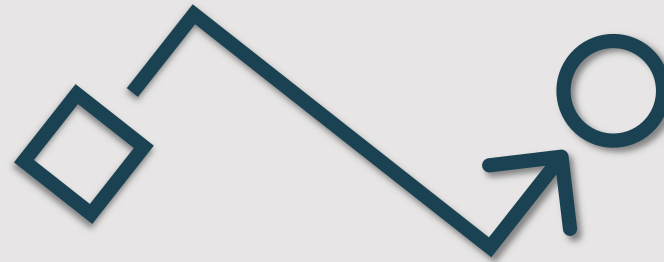
AGENDA

- Review recent and ongoing transit integration efforts
- Project Overview
- What are transit riders saying?
- How do the MTC efforts fit into this?
- What should be tackled first?
- Next steps for this project



Background

How we got here



2012 - MTC Transit Sustainability Project

- Recommendation for Sonoma operators to pursue functional and institutional consolidation where it is supported by local planning and input.

2019 - Transit Integration Efficiency Study

- Improve the rider experience in Sonoma County.
- Increase the efficiency of delivering high quality public transit services.
- Reduce operating and capital costs to enable improved service.

2020 - 2021 - MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Task Force

- Recognize critical recovery challenges facing public transit agencies.
- Advance equity.
- Identify actions to implement network Management & Governance reforms
- Advance current transit initiatives and integrate with reforms

Background

MTC Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan

Problem Statement

- 27 agencies in Bay Area, each with its own unique policies.
 - Procedures and operating practices best suited for their immediate service areas and local priorities
 - Not organized to support customer-friendly, interagency travel



Fares and Payment

Simpler, consistent, and equitable fare and payment options attract more riders.



Customer Information

Integrated mapping, signage and real-time schedule information makes transit easier to navigate and more convenient for both new and existing riders.



Transit Network

Bay Area transit services are equitably planned and integrally managed as a unified, efficient, and reliable network.



Accessibility

Transit services for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes are coordinated efficiently.



Funding

The Bay Area's transit system uses its existing resources more efficiently and secures new, dedicated revenue to meet its capital and operating needs.

Background

MTC Bay Area Transit
Regional Network Management (RNM)

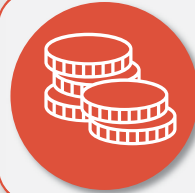
Advisory Bodies

- RNM Committee
- RNM Customer Advisory Group
- RNM Council

Transit Operator Coordination

- Dozens of recurring regional transit coordination meetings attended by transit staff
- Coordination on staffing meetings among Sonoma and Marin operators

RNM Efforts Underway



Fare Integration Policy

- Clipper 2.0
- Clipper Bay Pass Pilot Programs
- Transfer Policy Pilot



Mapping and Wayfinding

- Regional design standards and compliance requirements, centralized procurement
- Prototypes, including Santa Rosa - Fall 2024
- Pilots, including Sonoma County - 2026



Bus Transit Priority

- Identify BTP Policy
- Define BTP corridors and needs
- Centralized coordination



Accessibility

- Standardize paratransit eligibility practices
- One-seat ride pilots

Background

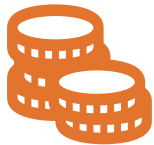
Work completed and underway



- Paratransit “One Seat Ride”
- Synchronized schedule change dates
- **Integrated Transit Service Plan**
- Marin Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service Analysis



- New customer service number connects to all three transit agencies
- Cross training on system information for all agencies



- Common fare free days
- Joint funding award for Fare Free Youth program starting summer 2023
- Clipper START participation
- Uniform base fares
- Joint fare reinstatement



- Phase I of website integration with new CityBus site
- Transit App Royal subscription
- Joint marketing of fare programs

Background

Marin-Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service Analysis "MASCOTS"

Impetus

- Changed regional travel demand and service levels
- Identified need to comprehensively study regional service along Hwy 101 corridor

Structure

- Agencies agreed on principles of coordination
- Monthly GM meetings
- Subcommittees:
 - Planning
 - Marketing
 - Finance

Plan Goals

- Inform future service planning activities at the respective operators
- Maximize rider benefit with the combined resources of all services
- Final plan by December 2024



INTEGRATED TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

PROJECT OVERVIEW

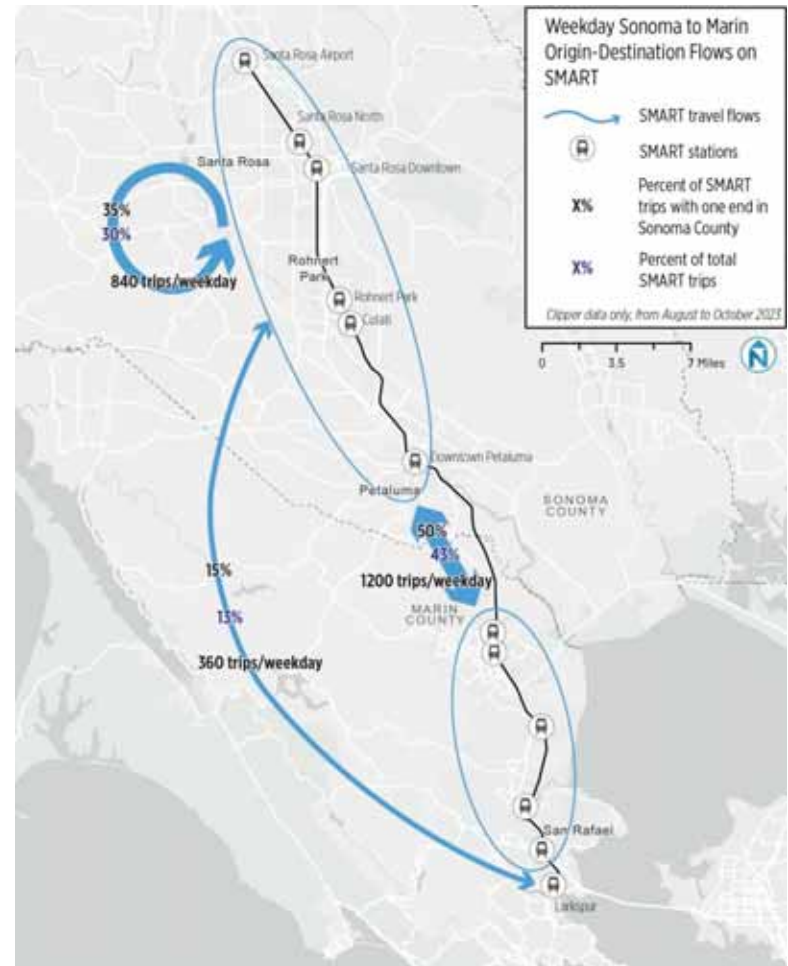
- **Overarching vision:** Improve mobility for riders in Sonoma County
- **Goal:** Identify opportunities for reducing duplication of service to allow for reallocation of resources to improve service
- Agencies involved: Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa CityBus, Petaluma Transit, Golden Gate Transit, SMART
- Started work in February 2023
- This study builds off the 2019 Sonoma County Transit Integration and Efficiency Study



WHY IS TRANSIT INTEGRATION IN SONOMA COUNTY IMPORTANT?

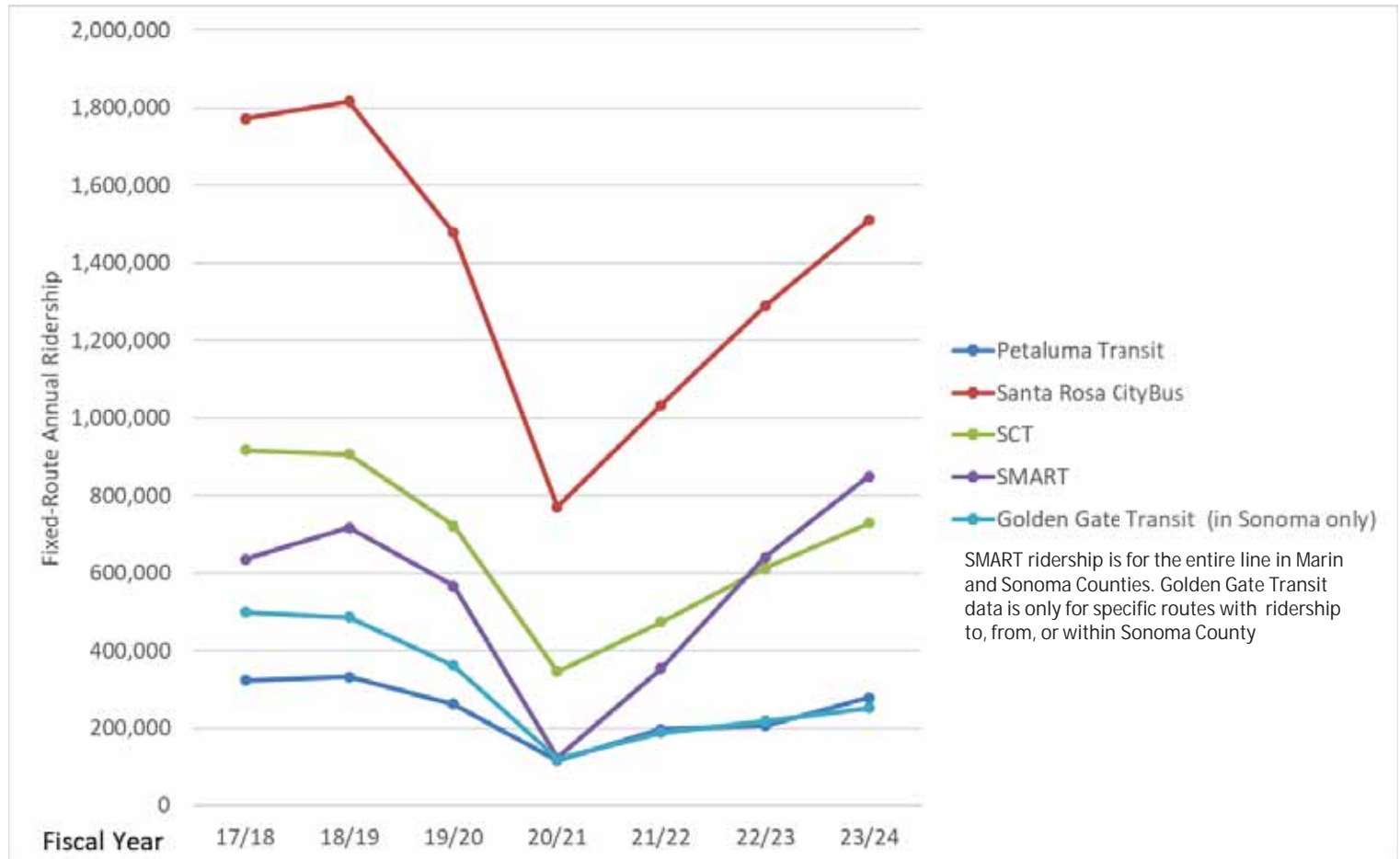
- 90% of all travel in Sonoma County starts and ends in Sonoma County
- Many lower income people depend on transit to move around the county, including the less populated parts
- Integration efforts need to advance to address major mobility issues for transit riders and attract new riders
- Some urban areas are over-served, but many, especially in the more rural areas, are underserved. Reduce over-service to improve distribution.

Did you know? 87% of trips on SMART have at least one leg of the trip in Sonoma County



SMART Origin-Destination Flows
See Chapter 5 in Report

SYSTEM CONTEXT – TRANSIT IS GROWING IN SONOMA COUNTY



WHAT ARE TRANSIT RIDERS SAYING?

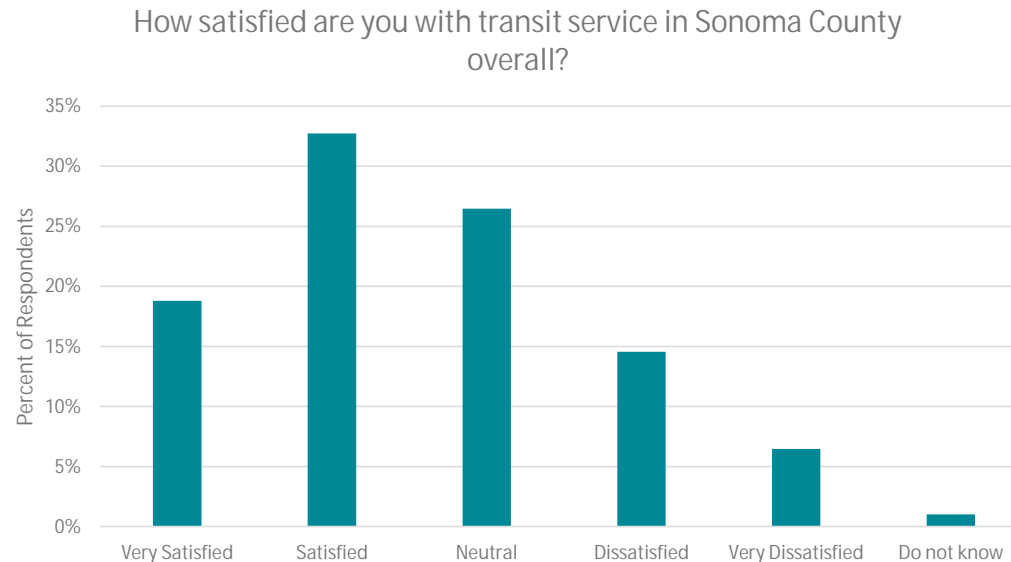
HOW DID THE PROJECT REACH TRANSIT RIDERS?

- **Community events** - **eight** staffed by NN and partner agencies in April and May 2023
- **Pop-up events** - **eight** at transit stations/stops and colleges staffed by NN in May 2023
- **Administered public survey**
 - Open from mid-April to mid-May 2023
 - 774 responses received (34 in Spanish)
 - 574 riders, 200 non-riders
 - NN rode buses and trains in May 2023 to pass out fliers to take survey
 - Survey advertised and administered at the 16 community and pop-up events
 - Survey also promoted on agency social media platforms and email lists



SATISFACTION WITH TRANSIT

- Approximately **51% of riders** reported they were **satisfied or very satisfied**
- **Net satisfaction score is 31%** (computed as the difference between the satisfied and dissatisfied responses)
 - Indicates a positive sentiment by the public overall, but one that is held by a small majority





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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Transit is a lifeline for many riders
- Many riders do not have any other transportation options
- **45% of riders** who only use CityBus, Petaluma Transit, and/or SCT **do not have regular access to a vehicle**
 - **60% of lower income riders** (defined as individuals that had a household income of \$60,000 or less per year), responded they **do not have regular access to a vehicle.**
- **Reducing duplication of service and providing a more seamless trip can help address many of the top issues being faced by riders**

TOP 5 ISSUES FOR RIDERS

- Buses do not run **early** enough and late enough on **weekends** (-20% net satisfaction)
- Buses do not operate **enough** on **weekends** (-14% net satisfaction)
- Buses do not run **late** enough on **weekdays** (-11% net satisfaction)
- Buses do not operate **often enough** (-11% net satisfaction)
- **Waiting time** when transferring between buses **is unreasonable** (-2% net satisfaction)



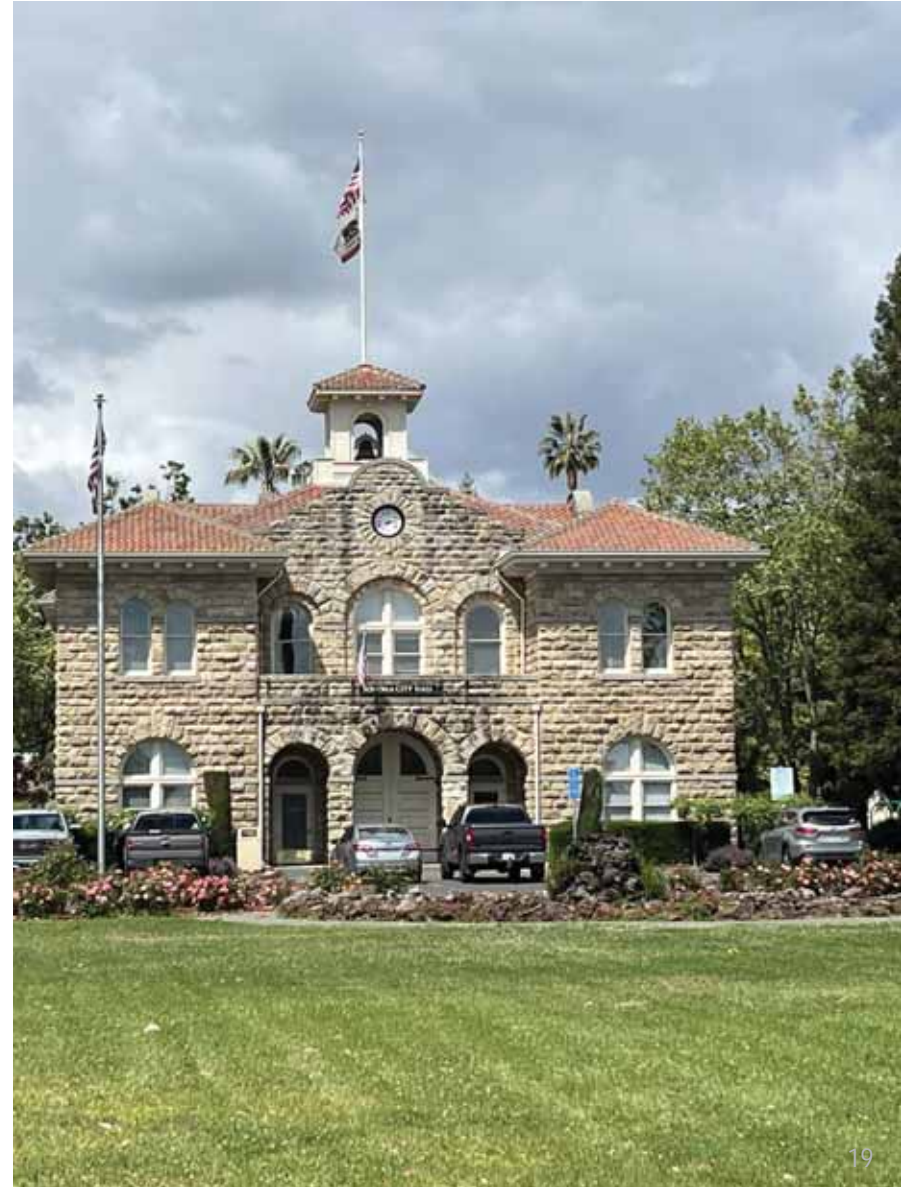
TRANSFERS IN SONOMA COUNTY

- Based on the rider survey - half of transit trips taken in Sonoma County require transfers some, or all, of the time
- Based on the survey, 70% of riders said coordinating schedules to reduce waits would help
- These findings underscore the need to conduct transit origin-destination study to better understand travel patterns



WHY DO RIDERS NOT USE TRANSIT MORE OFTEN?

- Service not running when it is needed (50%)
- Service not running where it is needed (42%)
- Travel time taking too long (38%)



DIRECT QUOTES FROM RIDERS

“Better integration between the transit systems is overdue.”

“Need to get more buses running on weekend and holiday. People do still work that need to take buses.”

- More information can be found in the report including:
 - Details on the outreach that was conducted
 - Results of many other survey questions such as route numbering, transfer patterns, passes, and more
 - Direct feedback from riders

8 PUBLIC OUTREACH

INTRODUCTION

Public outreach was an important part of the existing conditions effort. This chapter documents this public outreach effort and the feedback that was received. The public outreach effort consisted of three major components: in-person outreach, a public survey, and stakeholder meetings. Each of these is discussed in the following sections.

IN-PERSON OUTREACH

The in-person outreach for this project included staffing tables at scheduled community events, conducting “pop-ups” at transit centers and college campuses, and riding transit vehicles. The primary purpose of this outreach was to administer a public survey for this project, described in the next section of this chapter.

Eight community events were staffed by SCTA, SCT, Petaluma Transit, CityBus, and/or Nelson\Nygaard staff, listed below. Team members staffed tables/booths where members of the public could stop by and take the survey.

- Sonoma State University Climate Summit – April 15, 2023
- Los Cien Environmental Justice & Equity Event – April 15, 2023
- Earth Day Santa Rosa – April 22, 2023
- Earth Day Healdsburg – April 22, 2023
- Petaluma Butter and Eggs Day – April 22, 2023
- Sebastopol Farmers’ Market – April 30, 2023
- Cloverdale Farmers’ Market – May 2, 2023
- Santa Rosa Bike to [Work Day](#) Energizer Station – May 18, 2023

Nelson\Nygaard staff conducted “pop-ups” at several locations throughout the county on the dates listed below. These pop-ups were intended to be a casual opportunity to engage with individuals at college campuses and transit centers about the project and to get individuals to take the survey.

- Santa Rosa Junior College – May 2, 2023
- Santa Rosa Transit Mall – May 2 and 4, 2023
- Coddington Transit Center – May 2, 2023

HOW DO THE MTC EFFORTS FIT IN?

MTC EFFORTS UNDERWAY

- Clipper 2.0
- Fare Integration Task Force
- Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project
- Network Manager Work Plan
- Waiting for MTC to guide new directions may be viable for some issues, such as Clipper 2.0
- Better network connectivity and improved travel times are high on MTC's priority list, but on a longer timeframe work plan, so getting started on those two items are less likely to be duplicative and highly beneficial for local transit riders

WHAT SHOULD BE TACKLED FIRST?

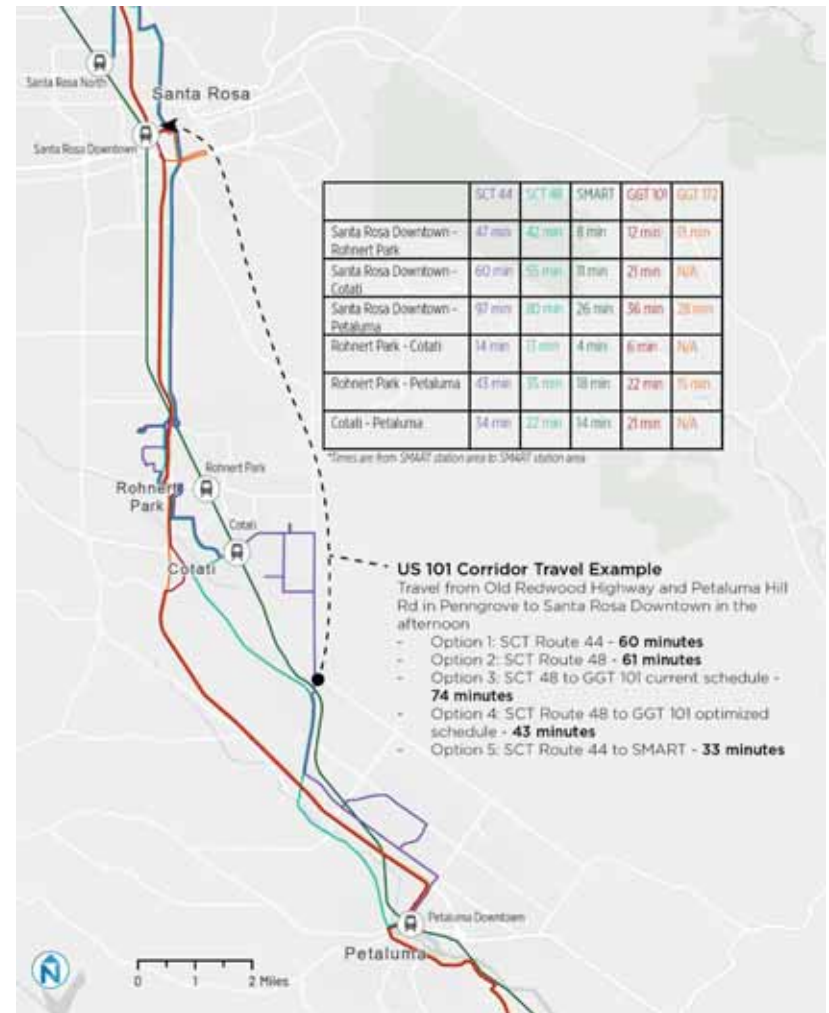
OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Report has 26 recommendations, plus corridor and microtransit recommendations
- Cover many topic areas, including:
 - **Data** – Recommendations to improve data collection/information management
 - **Overlapping fixed-route corridors** – Alternatives to reduce duplication of service on various corridors
 - **Fixed-route recommendations** – Other fixed-route recommendations such as fare coordination, rider information, and organizational issues
 - **Paratransit** – Recommendations to improve integration of paratransit services
 - **Microtransit** – Potential zones that should be examined further



A HIGH PRIORITY – THE 101 CORRIDOR, WHY?

- It has the most overlapping service - SMART, Golden Gate Transit, CityBus, SCT, and Petaluma Transit all provide service along some portion of the corridor
- It serves the largest concentration of population and employment in the county
- Has the greatest potential to improve mobility for the most riders
- Opportunity to reallocate transit resources to improve service on the corridor



Travel Time Analysis of U.S. 101 Corridor
 See Chapter 11 in Report

U.S. 101 CORRIDOR PLANNING TASKS

- **Collect data** - Stop level ridership and origin-destination data
 - This data was not available as part of this study
 - **Do detailed planning**
 - Review and analyze data to understand what is happening along U.S. 101
 - Refine initial concepts based on new data
 - **Conduct public outreach**
 - Confirm public support and allow for modifications before changes are implemented
- The MASCOTS Study to examine the U.S. Highway 101 Corridor in Marin County and Sonoma County can build off this work.



WHAT ARE OTHER HIGH PRIORITIES?

- Recommendations to improve data availability and uniformity
 - Not just a challenge for U.S. 101 Corridor, but throughout the county
 - One recommendation is that SCTA create a resource bank to assist agencies with data collection and management issues

- More information can be found in the report, including:
 - Details on each recommendation, including benefits and examples where recommendations are working

D-4: UNIFY DATA REPORTING FORMATS

Alignment with Goals

Integrated Transit Network	Agency Stewardship	Customer Experience
X	X	

Implementation Details

Priority for Implementation	Ease of Implementation	Financial Investment Needed	Agencies In Charge of Implementation
High	Medium	Low	SCT, CityBus, PT

Description

SCT, CityBus, and Petaluma Transit all present their performance statistics in different formats and depths of information. This makes it difficult to combine datasets or compare performance among agencies. The agencies should agree on one consistent reporting standard to allow for easy comparison between agencies. Having all operators use one consistent reporting standard would allow for summary statistics to be more easily collected, aggregated, and compared. This recommendation could complement the efforts covered by Recommendation F-10, which would unify service standards across the various agencies.

Benefits

- Makes it easier for data to be aggregated and compared for future planning efforts.

Where else is this working?

- **Ventura County, CA** - The nine agencies operating in Ventura County agreed to use a consistent data format.

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS PROJECT

- Report to be posted at: <https://scta.ca.gov/planning/transit-integration/>
- Make presentations to Boards/Councils in June and July
- Request each Board/Council to sign onto an initiative to improve transit integration in Sonoma County (via MOU)
- Continue coordination with MTC and MASCOTS transit integration efforts
- **What questions do you have?**

