

Draft 2011 Legislative Priorities and Platform

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Monitor the federal process related to new federal transportation, climate change and energy bills. Monitor any efforts at the federal level to implement a new stimulus program or other financing mechanisms that could impact transportation or climate change efforts.
2. Monitor and support, when appropriate, legislative proposals to increase the overall funding levels for transportation infrastructure, operations and maintenance in Sonoma County, including measures related to an increased fuel tax, a VMT tax, a vehicle license fee, a user fee and/or a carbon tax.
3. Monitor and advocate for funding opportunities to implement climate change projects and programs that will help Sonoma County reach its emission reduction goals.
4. Oppose efforts to reduce or divert funding from transportation projects and support efforts to protect and preserve transportation funding.
5. Monitor and participate in the implementation of AB32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, including attention to the development and issuance of implementation rules and regulations by State agencies such as the California Air Resources Board, the State Office of Planning and Research and the California Energy Commission.
6. Monitor and participate in the implementation of SB 375, including plans for attainment of regional emission reduction targets. Work to ensure that local participation in Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) is a priority at the regional level.



LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Funding

1. Protect Sonoma County's statutory portions of the state highway and transit funding programs.
2. Monitor and support, as appropriate, legislative proposals to increase funding for transportation infrastructure, operations and maintenance in Sonoma County, including measures related to an increased fuel tax, a VMT tax, a vehicle license fee, a user fee and/or a carbon tax.
3. Seek/sponsor legislation in support of initiatives that increase the overall funding levels for transportation priorities in Sonoma County, including measures related to an increased fuel tax, a VMT tax, a vehicle license fee, a user fee and/or a carbon tax.
4. Support a constitutional amendment changing Prop.111 to allow for the indexing of California state gas tax (back to 1990, since the Prop.111 increase) phasing it in by 2 cents per year until it is current. Oppose legislative or budget proposals which will redirect gas tax funds away from local agencies.
5. Seek a fair share for Sonoma County of any federal and state discretionary funding made available for transportation grants, programs and projects.
6. Protect State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds from use for purposes other than those covered in SB 45 of 1997 (Chapter 622) and support timely allocation of new STIP funds.
7. Support state budget and California Transportation Commission allocation to fully fund projects for Sonoma County included in the State Transportation Improvement Program and the 2009 Comprehensive Transportation Plan.
8. Seek/sponsor legislation in support of initiatives that increase the overall funding levels for transportation priorities in Sonoma County.
9. Support measures to restore local government's property tax revenues used for general fund purposes, including road rehabilitation and maintenance.
10. Support legislation to secure adequate budget appropriations for highway, bus, rail, air quality and mobility programs in Sonoma County.
11. Support initiatives to pursue the 55% or lower voter threshold for county transportation infrastructure measures.
12. Support efforts to quickly enact a new federal transportation bill that provides a fair share return of funding to California and allows flexibility to fund key priorities within Sonoma County.
13. Support or seek legislation to assure a dedicated source of funding, other than the State Highway Account for local streets and roads maintenance and repairs, and for transit operations.
14. Oppose any proposal that could reduce Sonoma County's opportunity to receive transportation funds, including diversion of state transportation revenues for other purposes.

15. Support additional funding for para-transit operations, including service for persons with disabilities and senior citizens.
16. Support legislation to further fund Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Transit programs.
17. Pursue federal funding for the following priority projects and transit services:
 - A. Marin/Sonoma Narrows
 - B. SRJC Bicycle/Pedestrian Overcrossing
 - C. Electric vehicle fleet conversion and infrastructure
 - D. SMART and bus transit priority projects
 - E. Safe Routes to School
 - F. Route 116/121 Roundabout
 - G. Other Measure M projects

Land Use

1. Support legislation providing land use incentives in connection with rail and multimodal transit stations – Transit Oriented Development.
2. Support legislative and regulatory efforts to ensure that projects from Sonoma County cities are eligible for state and regional funding of Transportation Oriented Development (Transit Oriented Development) projects. Ensure that development and transit standards for TOD projects can be reasonably met in more rural and suburban communities.
3. Monitor implementation of project development areas in the Bay Area and support local efforts to add or increase PDAs within their jurisdiction.

Climate Change/Air Quality

1. Monitor the implementation of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, including the development and issuance of implementing rules by the California Air Resources Board and the State Office of Planning and Research.
2. Monitor implementation of SB 375 (Steinberg), including establishment of regional emission reduction targets. Ensure that local Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) are included as part of the development of regional SCS.
4. Support legislation, which ensures that any fees imposed to reduce vehicle miles traveled, or to control mobile source emissions, are used to support transportation programs and for equity purposes to help consumers make the economic transition to a low carbon lifestyle.
5. Support legislation providing infrastructure for low, ultra-low and zero emission vehicles.
6. Monitor energy policies and alternative fuel legislation or regulation.

7. Support legislation to provide funding for innovative, intelligent/advanced transportation and air quality programs, which relieve congestion, improve air quality and enhance economic development.
8. Support income tax benefits or incentives that encourage use of alternative fuel vehicles, vanpools and public transit without reducing existing transportation or air quality funding levels.
9. Support federal climate change legislation that provides funding from cap and trade programs to local transportation agencies for public transportation and/or to low- and middle-income consumers to address disproportionate equity impacts.
10. Support legislation and/or budget language that ensures any new programs to reduce greenhouse gases or respond to climate change are implemented sensibly, equitably, and effectively. Further, advocate that any new State mandates include full cost recovery by Counties. Support budgetary action to fund local implementation of AB 32 and SB 375 requirements.
11. Support state budget initiative, legislation, or regulatory changes to increase funds available for incentive programs to reduce air pollution.
12. Monitor sea-level rise and climate change in relation to existing and proposed transportation facilities in Sonoma County and participate in adaptation planning and implementation.
13. Follow development of the Public Goods Charge legislation and work to place a role for RCPA in allocation of funds for local projects in this program. If there is an opportunity for direct funding of RCPA ask for it.
14. Work to make sure AB811 programs qualify as aggregators of energy efficiency credits.
15. Support rapid implementation of a new feed in tariff either in CPUC proceedings or by legislation.
16. Support reauthorization of funding for the Self Generation Incentive Program and work to remove SGIP requirements that unnecessarily disqualify projects.
17. Seek an amendment to the cap-and-trade regulation that would reduce the statewide emissions cap by the documented emissions reductions from voluntary programs or other measures that assure the integrity of voluntary programs.
18. Support legislation that would allow agencies to use excess net metered renewable to offset power use at other agency locations.
19. Support implementation of a Carbon Free Certification for California businesses and agencies that produce or procure renewable energy and renewable fuel in excess of their energy use without regard to sale of offsets or credits.

Alternative Modes: Bikes, bus and rail

1. Support legislation promoting bicycling and bicycle facilities as a commute option, including expansion of Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Transit.
2. Support legislation that increases employers' opportunities to offer commute incentives.
3. Seek funds for commuter rail service connecting Sonoma and Marin Counties.

4. Monitor the implementation of the High Speed Rail project and its impact on transit funding.
5. Protect and increase funding levels for transit. Oppose reductions in state funding sources for transit without substitution of comparable or additional revenue.
6. Support an income tax credit to employers for subsidizing employee transit passes.
7. Support tax benefits and/or incentives for programs to promote the use of public transit.
8. In partnership with other transit agencies, seek strategies to assure public transit receives a fair share of funding for welfare-to-work social services care, and other community-based programs.

Project Delivery

1. Monitor legislation to encourage the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency to reform administrative procedures to expedite federal review and reduce delays in payments to local agencies and their contractors for transportation project development, right-of-way and construction activities.
2. Support legislation and/or administrative reforms to enhance Caltrans project delivery, such as simultaneous Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and engineering studies, design-build authority, and a reasonable level of contracting out of appropriate activities to the private sector.
3. Support legislation and/or administrative reforms that result in cost and/or time savings to environmental clearance processes for transportation projects.
4. Continue to streamline federal application/reporting/monitoring requirements to ensure efficiency and usefulness of data collected and eliminate unnecessary and/or duplicative requirements.
5. Monitor efforts to establish a regional Express Lanes (HOT) network in the Bay Area and analyze how such a network might be established on Highway 101 in Sonoma County and what the impacts might be.

