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Looking Forward



Photo: Kevin Etter

The value of this Plan is that it provides a framework for addressing our community's near-term needs while also looking ahead to ensure that STA continues to lead the way to a strong future for Solano County. This chapter will highlight several key strategies that are at the forefront of our effort.

The CTP reflects our agency's commitment to meet Solano's diverse mobility and sustainable development goals by moving beyond a traditional definition of transportation planning as devising a simple transaction to get from here to there; moving people and goods from one destination to another. STA will increasingly plan with a broader focus in recognition that our communities' health and prosperity demand solutions that intertwine transportation solutions with housing affordability, economic opportunity, and heightened consideration of our most vulnerable populations. Employing

a holistic planning framework is integral to the development of a more sustainable Solano County; one that recognizes the triple bottom line of economy, environment, and equity.

At the time of this writing, it is important to acknowledge that the unfolding nationwide coronavirus crisis presents formidable challenges to our community's immediate well-being, with grave consequences for our personal health, economy and mobility. More than any other aspect of our multi-modal network, Solano's transit operators face unprecedented operational and funding challenges, leading to lasting impacts unless we have the will to reimagine how to more efficiently organize for the future. STA will remain focused on helping people get to work during the crisis and continue doing so until the lingering disruptive effects of the pandemic have been resolved.



Transportation & Land Use

STA has long recognized the value of integrating land use and transportation considerations. STA's vision statement, which calls for the organization to enhance the quality of life, support economic development, and improve accessibility for all members of the community, acknowledges that those goals can only be realized through united planning efforts. Focused growth that creates housing with active transportation opportunities and transit access to jobs will bring cascading benefits including reduced congestion, improved air quality, better public health, and more fulfilling lives. Achieving these linked rewards depends upon STA's continued leadership in aligning PDA, PPA, and PCA designations with varied funding streams to achieve transformative results.

Achieving compact growth in PDAs will become the signature demonstration of Solano's longstanding orderly growth policy. Every city in Solano has designated PDAs where future growth will be focused. STA's expanding land use coordination

role will be especially helpful to our cities and the County, attracting regional and state funding to increase affordable housing production, especially in PDAs with integrated transit opportunities.

The more recent addition of the PPA designation to STA's regional planning framework aligns well with our efforts to promote economic vitality in the county. Relative to the region, there is an abundance of housing in Solano, but fewer jobs. STA's work with the Solano EDC and interested jurisdictions has focused on supporting existing businesses while attracting specifically targeted new ones. We will continue helping forge Public/Private Partnerships, as recommended in Solano EDC's *Moving Solano Forward* report, to generate matching funds for projects that accelerate economic growth and improve workforce income.

Equally important, designating PCAs that protect Solano County's unique natural resources will provide current and future generations with places for recreation, renewal, and appreciation of the natural world's vital role in our lives.



Equity

In this CTP, STA has broken new ground with the inclusion of the Equitable Access, Benefit, and Participation chapter. Its Key Principles codify our commitment to work collaboratively with communities and regional authorities to improve the quality of life for all persons throughout Solano County.

Ensuring that all residents benefit from transportation investments will become a key measure of fulfilling STA's mission. Concentrating development in PDAs can provide many benefits, but it can also add displacement pressure on existing vulnerable communities. Increasing economic vitality while minimizing displacement requires a delicate balance to ensure that projects retain Solano's character as a diverse, affordable place to live, while encouraging beneficial growth that realizes the County's full economic potential. Including affordable workforce housing in the mix of new development is essential to reduce unacceptable displacement of senior, disabled, and low-income persons.

Through the *Solano Mobility* program, STA has been a leader in addressing the transportation needs not just for the everyday commuter, but for older adults, people with disabilities and youth/students. Innovative micromobility offerings, such as the First/Last Mile Program and the Benicia Subsidized Lyft Program, will continue to grow, increase transportation efficiency and allow for expanded access, especially in areas where fixed route transit is not viable.

Going forward, STA will make an extra effort to engage Solano's diverse communities, in project planning, performance reviews, and funding decisions. We will expand our communication capacity to include multiple languages. Incorporating new ideas, such as Vallejo's participatory budgeting process, will engage a greater community cross-section in transportation decisions, increasing a sense of civic pride and personal growth.

Maintaining progress in transportation equity will also require STA to collect accurate information of needs, investments, and outcomes. Continued monitoring will help us confirm that our choices have achieved their goal of improving the lives of all residents and workers in Solano.

Funding

At a time when most existing transportation funding sources are devoted to maintain the existing system, expanding federal, state, and regional government partnerships will be key to developing the mobility infrastructure required to support new housing and economic opportunities. STA will be proactive in developing revenue streams with agencies at all levels of government, and our own business community. Improvements will need to utilize novel financing mechanisms, bonds, and loan programs to support. Strengthening partnerships with key transit agencies, including WETA and Capitol Corridor can help link local needs with larger regional efforts and funding sources.



Photo: Robert Couse-Baker



The Moving Solano Forward Report by the Solano Economic Development Corporation identified several tools to help generate funding for infrastructure necessary to propel economic growth. Those tools include Special Assessment Districts, Tax Increment Financing, developer funding, financing and incentives, as well as Federal and State loan programs. STA will continue to work to secure a local source of transportation funds, because those dollars will significantly attract and leverage other sources.

Increasing regional funding sources for transportation projects is critical to allow making the infrastructure investments necessary around the bay. The recent passage of RM3 will enable numerous regional connection improvements to move forward. The measure designates over \$250 Million for improvements to I-80, \$100 Million for SR-37, as well as supporting increased ferry service and expanded offerings from Solano Express.

To make the most effective impact on regional transportation challenges we must increase our collaborative planning alongside fundraising efforts. FASTER Bay Area, a group of policy, government, business, transportation and community leaders, has been working with stakeholders and community leaders throughout the Bay Area to create a plan for a seamless, modern transit system that provides more affordable transportation options, reduces pollution and improves economic opportunity for low- and middle-income residents. FASTER's goal is to raise \$100 Billion through a sales tax measure that could be in front of voters as soon as 2021.

Innovative Technologies

As the twenty-first century proceeds, a wide variety of changes have the potential to dramatically reshape our communities. In some instances, internet technologies will replace the need to travel at all, reducing congestion and benefitting cleaner air at the same time. New modes of travel such as on-demand transit, ridesharing, autonomous vehicles, electric bikes, and motorized scooters are emerging as attractive micro-transit alternatives.

SolTrans has already identified these services as potential components of a unified transportation platform through its Solano County Transit Mobility-on-Demand (SCT-MOD) Project. The long range vision of the effort is to make a range of flexible, on-demand services and traditional transit offerings available through a single portal. Importantly, the SCT-MOD project has the potential to improve access for underserved communities while simultaneously reducing costs through improved efficiency. It is an excellent example of how public-private partnerships can achieve mutually beneficial results.

Expanding use of electric vehicles, such as through the Solano Electric Vehicle (EV) Transition Program, will be an integral component of California's strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy independence. Efforts are currently underway to install new charging facilities at key locations around the county and will increase in support of this technological shift.

In sum, STA is dedicated to integrating innovation, strategic partnerships, increased community participation, and focused community development collaboration into our ongoing delivery of projects and programs that Solano residents and businesses rely upon.