

II. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE & CONTENTS

"Create a Transportation Plan for the City of Santa Cruz that is inspiring, innovative and implementable with broad-based community support."

MTS Mission Statement

In April 2000, the City of Santa Cruz and the University of California at Santa Cruz initiated a partnership to jointly fund a community-based approach to planning the City's transportation future. The Master Transportation Study (MTS) is the final document of this innovative, community-based approach to creating a safe, sustainable transportation future for Santa Cruz.

Representing a Diverse Community

The City Council initiated the process by appointing a seventeen-member MTS Steering Committee to oversee policy and implementation recommendations to the Transportation Commission and City Council. Representing the diversity of the Santa Cruz community, Steering Committee members were selected from the University of California at Santa Cruz, the City Planning Commission, the City Transportation Commission, Downtown Commission, the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, neighborhoods and community interest groups.

Study Objectives

Through the community participation process, the following four objectives emerged as the primary focus of the MTS:

- Expand and offer new travel choices for people who live, work, play and visit Santa Cruz
- Provide relief from citywide vehicle congestion
- Improve community livability
- Achieve a sustainable transportation future.

The MTS integrates pedestrian, bicycle, transit and street transportation plans and programs as a foundation for updating the City's General Plan, zoning ordinance, UCSC's Long Range Development Plan, and other city and regional transportation planning documents.

MTS Vision

Taking its strategic priorities from the community workshops held throughout the City, the MTS Steering Committee developed a comprehensive vision of a sustainable transportation future for Santa Cruz, offering new choices for transportation and a more livable environment for neighborhoods.

"The residents of Santa Cruz will make people- and neighborhood-friendly transportation a priority. Transportation will be safe, clean, affordable and sustainable. Santa Cruz will become widely known as the City where it's fun and easy to get around without a car."

Introduction to the MTS Vision

Study Contents

The MTS contains the following:

1. Identification of **current and future transportation challenges and opportunities** for the City over the next 20 years
2. Presentation of the **community's vision, goals and principles** for a sustainable transportation future
3. A **technical analysis of potential future travel** with impacts on City mobility
4. **12 strategic initiatives** that are **feasible solutions** to achieve the MTS vision and study objectives
5. **An Appendix summarizing:**
 - The **key findings** from the neighborhood workshops, festivals, and phone survey
 - **Outcomes of the two demonstration projects**, the Soquel Avenue Plan Line and the Seabright Area Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan
 - A citywide **Parking Pricing Study**, and
 - The interim Steering Committee document on the **12 key points of the MTS**.

KEY TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

The overarching challenge for Santa Cruz is the continuation of the present rate of growth of automobile trips that is increasing faster than population growth. This trend will exacerbate vehicle traffic congestion -- with an associated loss of neighborhood livability -- unless the community makes determined changes to:

- Increase transportation choices

- Reduce automobile dependency
- Use travel modes other than the single occupant vehicle

There are several key challenges to relieve existing vehicle traffic congestion and ensure no further growth in congestion by 2020. Overcoming the following challenges can enhance community livability and support a sustainable transportation future:

- **Future traffic growth.** If there is no change in travel behavior from today, forecasts indicate an increase of 19% for vehicle miles of travel during the PM peak hour. Vehicle hours of delay are projected to increase 92% as shown in Table 1. This substantial increase in delay is due to 6,000 p.m. peak-hour vehicle trips added to the transportation system by 2020 as shown in Table 2.
- **Need to significantly reduce peak-hour single occupant vehicle trips.** To achieve no growth in peak hour traffic by 2020, local vehicle trips internal to Santa Cruz need to be reduced by 17%, as shown in Table 2. Regional vehicle trips -- external commute in and out of town trips -- need to be reduced by 21% to achieve this objective.

Table 1: Comparison of Existing and Year 2020 Traffic Performance Measures Assuming Current Trends		
Year	PM Peak Hour	
	Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD)	Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT)
2000	157	73,973
2020	302	88,180
Percent increase between 2000 and 2020	92%	19%

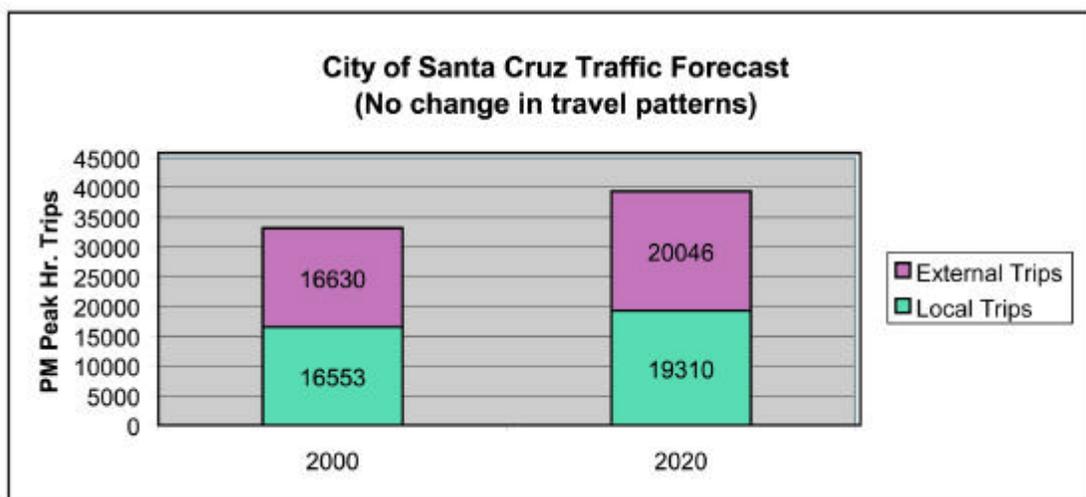
Notes: Data from Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments regional travel demand forecasting model.

Table 2: Comparison of Existing and Year 2020 Trips Assuming Current Trends			
Year	PM Peak Hour Trips		
	Trips Internal to Santa Cruz (II)	Trips bet. Santa Cruz and External Zones (IXXI + XIIX)	Total Santa Cruz Trips (II + IXXI + XIIX)
2000	16,553	16,630	33,183
2020	19,310	20,046	39,356
Net Growth	2,775	3,416	6,173
Percent Increase	17%	21%	19%

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments regional travel demand model.

- **The degree to which the City can influence local and regional travel.** Analysis indicates that about 50 percent of peak-hour vehicle trips within Santa Cruz are "internal" to the City as shown in Chart 1. The City has greatest influence on these trips. A key challenge for Santa Cruz is addressing both local and regional travel.
- **Santa Cruz cannot build its way out of vehicle traffic congestion because of the "triple convergence" principle.** When road capacity is increased, total travel time will ultimately equalize over time until traffic moves at the same levels of congestion as it did previously. Expanding roadway capacity cannot eliminate periods of frustratingly slow speeds.

Chart 1: Projected Growth in Local and Regional Santa Cruz Travel 2000 - 2020



Key regional challenges are:

- *Highway 1 congestion*, where the four-lane freeway currently operates very poorly. Midweek congestion lasts 3.5 to 4 hours. Average daily traffic volumes will increase by 25 percent.
- *Low-density population growth in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County and Watsonville.* Population is projected to increase by 17 percent by 2020. Low-density development and growth will contribute to increasing auto dependence. This pattern of development is less responsive to shifting away from single-occupant-vehicle (SOV) modes of travel and utilizing fixed-route transit services.

Opportunities

Santa Cruz has a number of assets and opportunities that can address the key challenges and advance the MTS vision.

- Santa Cruz is blessed with a **beautiful environmental setting** ranging from redwood-covered coastal mountains to bright, sandy beaches, entertaining seaside

attractions, vibrant downtown, rich university life and diverse residential neighborhoods.

- Santa Cruz has the potential to be a **highly accessible city** with its walkable-scale street and block pattern, a highly interconnected street network and the clustering of employment and commercial centers of activity.
- Santa Cruz's values emphasize **an open-minded attitude** toward community building, participatory planning, environmental consciousness and celebrating diversity. The Santa Cruz community has a willingness to change to be less "auto-centric" and improve the quality of life for people from all social and economic backgrounds. The city has a long-standing commitment to be sustainable over time.
- Santa Cruz has a **good existing transit system** and is a community with **above average non-auto trips and high transit ridership**. UCSC is a local model for sustainable transportation with high non-SOV mode splits. Santa Cruz has the opportunity **to capitalize on the high number of short trips within the City**, and provide alternatives to the 50% of commuters who remain within the city-limits.
- Santa Cruz can build on the effectiveness of the existing transit system, maximize the efficiency of land use adjacent to transportation hubs and **ensure walking is an even more attractive travel choice** than it is today.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

To achieve the City Council's goal for broad based community support, a community-based participation process was developed, emphasizing the following:

- Neighborhood based planning
- Broad community participation and input through festivals, workshops, community meetings and polling
- Identification of creative solutions
- Identification of feasible solutions

The process has successfully engaged the community to identify transportation assets, issues and opportunities, as well as review and respond to proposed solutions.

Community Representation & Decision-Making

The City Council initiated the process by appointing the City Transportation Commission as the main advisory body for the MTS, followed by appointing a seventeen-member MTS Steering Committee (SC) to oversee policy and implementation recommendations for the Council. The Steering Committee worked directly with city staff and the project consultant's team to ensure community participation and to provide feedback during the study.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to support the Steering Committee, with representation from UCSC, local government and regional transit agencies. A Conference Committee made up of members of the SC and TAC was established to finalize specific technical and policy recommendations for Steering Committee adoption.

Community Participation Tools & Process

The project consultant team developed a variety of public participation tools to engage the committees and community to identify the city's transportation assets, issues, and opportunities. Meeting facilitation assisted the Steering Committee meetings to conceive a new transportation vision for the City, as well as focus discussion to conceptualize, review, and evaluate potential solutions.

Community process tools included regular monthly meetings of the SC and TAC to direct and respond to the team's work products, two public mobility festivals, several neighborhood-based planning workshops, community meetings and a telephone survey. Two demonstration projects were conducted to test and evaluate the application of MTS planning principles, concepts and process designs. Please see Appendix 6 for the Soquel Avenue Plan Line Study and Appendix 4 for the Seabright Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan.

Through the use of a regularly updated web page interface, the Internet provided the community access and information as to the progress of the MTS, including the time and location of neighborhood meetings and a means to provide input to the study.

The MTS participatory planning process engaged a broad cross section of community members including local business, residents, UC students, local government, cyclists, pedestrian advocates, and other interested parties.

Results of Community Participation

The following community assets, values and opportunities were identified by the Steering Committee:

Community Assets

Santa Cruz can build on many strong and unique assets, including:

- A good existing transit system
- A community with above average non-auto trips and high transit ridership
- Productive and beneficial interagency coordination within the City (e.g., between Transit District; TMA; Public Works)
- An existing configuration of major activity nodes all within walking distance

- A "Santa Cruz attitude" toward community building, environmental consciousness, and simplified lifestyles
- An existing rail corridor right-of-way available for other modes of transit

Core Values

The core values of Santa Cruz community members will be the foundation for constructing the overall transportation vision for the City and goals for the MTS. Core values include:

- Focus on transportation solutions that create community and bring people together
- Willingness to change the culture of Santa Cruz residents and create a community that is less "auto-centric"
- Desire to improve the quality of life in Santa Cruz and ensure that the City's transportation system is sustainable over time
- Desire to create travel choices that respect the needs of different demographic and user groups
- A goal of establishing a multi-objective, holistic approach
- Recognition that Santa Cruz is not an island and needs a regional perspective on transportation issues
- Desire to create a shared ownership of the City's transportation system and ensure a high level of connectivity between neighborhoods and transportation modes
- A goal of increasing the safety of the transportation system

Opportunities

The following opportunities can expand mobility options for Santa Cruz:

- Capitalize on the short trips within the City by diverting users to transportation modes other than single occupancy automobiles
- Consider the opportunity to capture the 50% of commuters who remain within the city-limits
- Assess Santa Cruz residents' willingness to switch transportation modes
- Consider improving the City's existing transit system-add to the frequency, service areas, and capacity
- Explore transit opportunities associated with the 6 million annual visitors and create ways to capture traffic at the "gates" of the City
- Explore ways to enhance the pedestrian experience in Santa Cruz



- Create a transit system in which the system itself is a destination for City residents and visitors (e.g., the cable cars in San Francisco)
- Maximize efficiency of land use adjacent to transportation hubs (i.e. higher density housing, mixed use, infill opportunities)
- Link transportation with school trips to have parents' carpool, and encourage children to walk, cycle or take transit to school.