

Planning, Policy,  
and  
Programming

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Project Title:  
Understanding the Influence of  
Local Option Sales Tax Measures on  
SB 375

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## Understanding the Influence of Local Option Sales Tax Measures on SB 375

This research will assess how county sales tax measures affect funding allocations and policy and program choices for adopted plans in four California MPOs.

### WHAT IS THE NEED?

In California, voter-adopted sales tax measures for transportation purposes comprise around 30% of capital spending in California in 2010. Some concerns have been raised about sales tax measures, such as their lack of alignment with regional planning priorities, their “lock-in” of funding commitments over long time periods, and their political imperative to satisfy multiple interests at election time, making performance orientation difficult. Little recent research has considered how the evolution of county sales tax measures for transportation in California have affected regional transportation plans (RTPs) developed by the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). SB 375 requires that MPO plans must include projects that help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

### WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The research team began the project with a literature review on county and regional sales tax measures and on the role of county transportation authorities. The findings from this review should directly inform the interview research questions as well as the project focus in general. The research team will work to understand the history and funding components of sales tax measures, which will be compiled into a spreadsheet. Findings should provide a direct comparison of expenditures by modal and use categories between county sales tax measures and projects listed in the study area Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs).

The research team will refine research questions and draft a list of interview candidates. The research team will contact interview candidates and schedule interviews. Once interviews are complete, the research team will synthesize findings. A completed project report, policy brief, and spreadsheet data will be submitted by the end of the project timeline.



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## WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The goal of this research is to assess how county sales tax measures affect funding allocations and policy and program choices adopted in MPO planning documents in California's four largest regions, with an eye to how and whether county-led projects affect VMT reduction, based on project types and uses funded, on MPO modeling of impacts on VMT/GHG where available, and considering other factors that MPO planners identify as important in this regard.

## WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

This research will assist county planners, MPOs, and other stakeholders with developing RTPs and other planning documents that utilize tax measure funds in a way that prioritized projects consistent with SB 743 and that will ultimately contribute to GHG emissions reductions.

## WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

The research team began by completing the literature review and selecting case study locations. The research team has completed intensive qualitative research on selected case study counties, and have been conducting interviews as per project strategy. The project team has had consistent meetings with Caltrans to discuss progress and gain feedback. The qualitative portion of the research is nearly complete. The interviews are also nearly complete and will be synthesized. The research team is currently working on completing the report draft, to submit to Caltrans for feedback by the end of November 2022.

## IMAGE

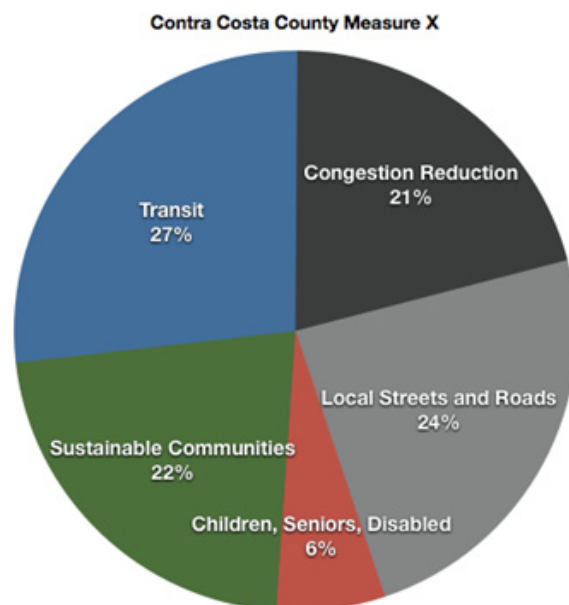


Image 1: Example of transportation project breakdown by category for Contra Costa County Measure A.