



# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026



# SANTA ROSA METRO CHAMBER

## LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026

We support policies that are consistent with the creation of a vibrant urban core, significantly increased housing for all income levels, a more diversified and inclusive economy, and a strong workforce.

We believe this will create a healthy business environment and thriving community for all. We will endorse policies and practices that support business start-up, innovation, expansion and attraction. We believe that the best policies use a data driven, evidence-based approach.

The Policy Platform includes nine issue areas, with a limited number of focused objectives. The goal of our Policy Platform is to establish a focused framework for developing and responding to local, state and national issues that positively or adversely affect our community and our members.

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leaders and members, and to guide its engagement on community efforts.

Thank you to the member representatives of the Metro Chamber's Advocacy Council, who volunteered their time and expertise in the establishment of this Local and State Policy Platform.

### **Economic Development & Business Support**

Economic development is critical to the long-term fiscal stability of our city and region. As local governments face ongoing budget pressures and structural deficits, growing the economic base is essential to strengthening the revenue side of the budget equation. Strategic investment in economic

development, through business growth, job creation, and increased commercial activity, is necessary to generate sustainable tax revenue, support core services, and ensure long-term financial resilience.

### **Government**

A high performing, responsive, and accountable government is essential to our community's success, driving regional collaboration and shaping policies that enable sustainable economic development.

### **Downtown**

A vibrant downtown is critical to attracting a high-quality workforce, supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and providing recreation, retail, and

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tourism opportunities. Strategic investment downtown generates lasting benefits including strong employers, access to good jobs, environmentally sustainable development, and increased tax revenue. Economic studies conducted by the City of Santa Rosa demonstrate the highest tax return and property value are in the city's downtown areas, providing the highest economic return on investment.

## Housing

Our housing crisis remains one of the most significant challenges to our long term economic, business, and cultural success. Without significantly expanding housing supply, housing scarcity and rising costs will continue to burden residents and constrain economic growth.

We support housing policies that increase housing production across all income levels by improving the time, certainty, and cost of housing development. This includes streamlining the entitlement and permitting processes, expanding by right development opportunities, easing zoning constraints, increasing ministerial approvals, and decreasing subjective requirements and unfunded mandates on housing developments to meet our local and regional housing needs.

## Homelessness

The causes of homelessness are multi-faceted and require a comprehensive, regionally coordinated approach. There is an urgent need for immediate, safe, and structured interim shelter solutions to address current impacts on our community while long-term housing and service strategies are implemented. We support policies, partnerships, and funding that expand housing options and

provide the services necessary to address the root causes of homelessness.

## Energy & Natural Resources/Disaster Preparedness

The extraordinary quality of our region's natural environment is critical to both our quality of life and the strength of our local economy, particularly in tourism and recreation. Effective resiliency planning must include our region's energy and natural resources with a clear understanding of threats and opportunities.

Recent droughts and wildfires highlight the need for sustainable resource management as well as land use, management practices, and building standards that minimize the impact of natural disasters. These events have become a part of living in this region and require sustained investment in response, mitigation, and preparedness for fires, floods, and earthquakes.

## Education

We support investments that will strengthen access to quality early child care, early education, and K-12 education; address the teacher shortage; and align postsecondary programs with employer needs, including a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and CTE (career technical education) opportunities. CTE opportunities for students are crucial to integrate real world examples and opportunities that help all students graduate from high school college- and career-ready.

## Transportation

Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve our transportation infrastructure, including securing funding to

maintain and upgrade long-neglected roads. Continued investment is essential to support economic growth, improve mobility, and enhance quality of life.

We support transportation policies and funding that increase mobility, relieve congestion, expand alternative commute options, and strengthen coordination across agencies to create a more connected and competitive regional system. Transportation funding sources must be maintained as this is critical to our economic success. The elimination of gas and other taxes, while attractive short-term options in times of economic hardship, create significant funding shortages to complete critical infrastructure projects. Funding should ensure long-term stability of our roads, bridges, and infrastructure, all necessary to support a vibrant economy.

## Tourism

Sonoma County's allure as a global destination for quality wines, craft beer, outdoor recreation, and culinary excellence is a critical driver of the region's economic success. Large employers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs all rely on the strength of the local tourism economy, which generates over two billion spent annually by visitors to Sonoma County, and provides amenities and recreation opportunities for locals. While Sonoma County has a diverse economy, tourism remains foundational. Continued investment in the tourism industry, arts, and special events is essential to sustain growth and competitiveness at the local, regional, and state levels.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS SUPPORT



Economic development is critical to the long-term fiscal stability of our city and region.

As local governments face ongoing budget pressures and structural deficits, growing the economic base is essential to strengthening the revenue side of the budget equation. Strategic investment in economic development, through business growth, job creation, and increased commercial activity, is necessary to generate sustainable tax revenue, support core services, and ensure long-term financial resilience.

We support policies that encourage and enable businesses to locate, expand, and prosper in our community. These policies must ensure that existing local businesses, diverse startups, and companies of all sizes have access to the resources, opportunities, and workforce needed to innovate and grow sustainably. We believe a strong business community and economy create a thriving community and prosperity for all.

### **Business Retention & Recruitment**

Local policies, tools, and services should be designed to help local companies become more competitive, grow, and thrive where they are rather than relocate. Local government should work collaboratively with the Chamber and other groups in attracting new employers and industries to Sonoma County that can increase local wages and generate new economic growth.

Retail leakage, when residents shop in other North Bay communities, represents a loss of local economic activity and tax revenue. Attracting new and diverse retailers will help retain consumer spending, strengthen the local economy, and increase sales tax revenues that support core services.

We also support state-level legislative changes to modernize point-of-sale tax allocation, particularly related to retail distribution centers, to ensure revenues more accurately reflect where economic activity occurs.

We support:

- Investments in infrastructure that attract businesses, create good paying jobs, and generate sustainable tax revenue

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- Prioritization of clean, safe, and well-maintained high-visibility areas to enhance the customer experience, economic environment, and business vitality
- Partnerships to create business accelerators, incubators, and entrepreneurship programs
- Implementation of targeted tax incentives and credits that support job creation, workforce development, and business investment

## Local Business Preference

Numerous economic studies demonstrate that when local governments spend with local businesses, the impact multiplies. Those businesses reinvest in local supply chains which drives economic activity, job creation, and increased tax revenue. Project Labor Agreements limit competition, increase taxpayer costs, and can exclude local workers and businesses from local projects—they constrain innovation, reduce opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses, and undermine a competitive, vibrant economy.

## Development/Construction Fees

Government should reduce or defer development-related fees, particularly for housing and economic development projects, to offset inflation and rising interest rates and accelerate project delivery. We also support adoption and implementation of state-level initiatives that expand incentives and flexibility for a broader range of housing types, including policies that enable increased density, infill development, and conversion of existing parcels to multi-unit housing.

## Local Media

A free press that covers community issues is a cornerstone of our democracy. A strong local media environment is essential to an informed public, a healthy economy, and a thriving community by supporting the flow of information, encouraging dialogue, and ensuring accountability.

Local journalism is fundamental to effective government and public oversight. Without it, communities face weaker financial oversight of taxpayer dollars, higher borrowing costs, and decreased civic engagement.

We support investments and protections that sustain a strong local journalism presence as a check on government operations and financial management. We also uphold the importance of free speech as a foundational element of democracy and economic prosperity.

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# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026 GOVERNMENT



A high performing, responsive, and accountable government is essential to our community's success, driving regional collaboration and shaping policies that enable sustainable economic development.

## **Budget**

We support budget policies that:

- Maintain core services, public safety, infrastructure, and economic development
- Align expenditures with sustainable revenue
- Include measurable outcomes and performance accountability

Budgets should reflect community priorities and the highest and best use of taxpayer dollars. While controlling costs is critical, not all cuts are equal—reductions to infrastructure and economic development can lead to higher long-term costs and reduced economic growth.

We also support strategies that strengthen and diversify revenue streams, including policies that encourage economic development, redevelopment of underutilized land, and growth in both property and sales tax bases to ensure long-term fiscal stability.

## **Community Safety**

Public safety agencies must remain responsive to community needs while evolving with expectations and technology. Strong public safety agencies are critical to community well-being. The Metro Chamber will continue to support the efforts of local public safety agencies to deter criminal behavior while building and maintaining the public's trust.

## **Accountability and Transparency**

Government decision-making should be data-driven, transparent, and inclusive of input from the business community and relevant industry experts. Staff should be responsive to policy direction set by elected officials and accountable for using quantitative, evidence-based approaches when developing and evaluating policy solutions. Work should consistently advance established policy priorities, with program recommendations aligned to those goals.



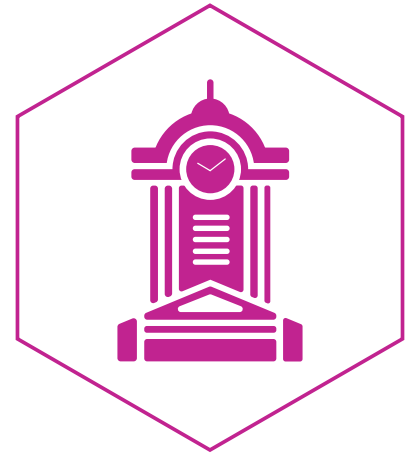
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# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026 DOWNTOWN



A vibrant downtown is critical to attracting a high-quality workforce, supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and providing recreation, retail, and tourism opportunities.

Strategic investment downtown generates lasting benefits including strong employers, access to good jobs, environmentally sustainable development, and increased tax revenue. Economic studies conducted by the City of Santa Rosa demonstrate the highest tax return and property value are in the city's downtown areas, providing the highest economic return on investment.

To strengthen downtown vitality and economic performance, we support:

- Expansion of public art and cultural amenities
- Enhanced pedestrian-level lighting and safety improvements
- Increased walkability, including temporary street closures to support pedestrian access and commerce
- Targeted incentives for businesses that provide services, activities, and experiences in the downtown core
- Support for facade improvement programs and targeted incentives for both new tenants and property owners to activate vacant storefronts

Given ongoing staffing limitations and capacity constraints within the City of Santa Rosa, we support expanded collaboration with qualified external organizations to advance research, planning, and project implementation. Leveraging outside resources can help move priority initiatives forward more efficiently and reduce delays.

## **Downtown Development**

To maximize the return on investment in Courthouse Square, we support strategic use of city resources, including land and incentives, to encourage critical housing and commercial developments downtown.

- Expansion of housing opportunities downtown
- Incentives to attract employment and business opportunities downtown



- Investment in events and cultural programming downtown
- Beautification, lighting, and wayfinding improvements
- Addressing public safety issues
- Addition of essential services, such as grocery stores, performing arts venues, and meeting/event spaces
- Utilization of public land for housing and redevelopment opportunities

## Placemaking

Continued investment in placemaking is essential to attracting residents, visitors, and employers. Placemaking is a key driver of economic development, helping to attract and retain businesses, boost tourism, and foster community pride and engagement. Creating vibrant, welcoming spaces enhances the downtown experience and delivers long-term economic and community benefits. We support investment in downtown as a family-friendly destination that promotes livability, strengthens community identity, and creates lasting benefits for future generations.

Together, these investments enhance the downtown's appeal, safety, and accessibility—making it a destination for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. They increase property values, expand the tax base, attract new employers and jobs, reduce commuting, and stimulate local spending. By driving tourism, foot traffic, and cultural activity, and by activating underused spaces into vibrant hubs of activity, these initiatives generate sustained economic growth and a resilient downtown.

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs) are an important tool to fund critical infrastructure while supporting housing and commercial development. By aligning infrastructure investment with development goals, EIFDs help incentivize projects in priority areas. We support the strategic use of EIFDs throughout Sonoma County to advance planned growth and long-term economic vitality. Santa Rosa and Sonoma County lose significant convention business due to a lack of adequate convention space. Downtown Santa Rosa is an ideal location for the development of a convention center based on the proximity of parking, commercial, arts, restaurant, and retail. The development of a convention center would significantly enhance downtown vitality and generate substantial regional economic benefits.

Support of our downtown businesses is key to economic growth and vibrancy. Available commercial space should be leveraged to attract new businesses to Sonoma County, particularly as evolving workforce and transportation patterns have expanded location flexibility and increased Sonoma County's competitiveness. We encourage strategic and timely spending of park development fees from downtown projects, through community-informed priorities, into art, parks, and recreation that strengthen downtown vibrancy.

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# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026 HOUSING



Our housing crisis remains one of the most significant challenges to our long term economic, business, and cultural success.

Without significantly expanding housing supply, housing scarcity and rising costs will continue to burden residents and constrain economic growth.

We support housing policies that increase housing production across all income levels by improving the time, certainty, and cost of housing development. This includes streamlining the entitlement and permitting processes, expanding by right development opportunities, easing zoning constraints, increasing ministerial approvals, and decreasing subjective requirements and unfunded mandates on housing developments to meet our local and regional housing needs.

## **Housing Production**

We support the development of diverse housing types to meet a wide range of affordability and demand, including workforce and missing middle housing.

To accelerate production, we support:

- Pro-housing policies aligned with the City of Santa Rosa's Housing Element
- Full and timely implementation of programs tied to Prohousing Designation
- Pursuit of state and regional funding opportunities
- Utilization of public land—including city, school district, and other publicly owned sites—for housing development
- Incentives for infill and affordable housing, including reduced fees and support for ADUs

## **Permitting and Regulation**

Predictable, efficient permitting is critical to housing production.



We support:

- Consistent implementation of adopted streamlining policies across all departments
- Increased certainty and transparency in entitlement and permitting processes
- Expansion of ministerial approvals and by-right development
- Designation of a high-level staff position to coordinate across departments and improve efficiency
- Effective staff training to educate and empower employees, minimize errors, and increase quality of interactions with applicants.

We support the ongoing modernization of CEQA to preserve its environmental intent while preventing misuse that delays or obstructs housing, contributing to our insufficient housing stock, high development costs, and high home prices. CEQA amendments should streamline the process and remove obstacles, particularly for high density and in-fill urban development.

## Rent Control

Rent control and just cause eviction policies are not effective housing solutions and ultimately exacerbate the housing shortage. Evidence shows these policies do not increase housing supply, reduce homelessness, or improve affordability, and instead discourage new investment in rental housing.

Expanding housing supply at all levels, from deed-restricted affordable to market-rate, is the most effective way to reduce housing costs and improve availability.

Support for tenants experiencing financial hardship should be provided through public funding, rather than through additional regulations or costs placed on housing providers. Policies that shift the burden onto landlords can reduce housing supply by discouraging investment and leading property owners to exit the rental market, resulting in long-term losses to the housing stock.

Additional local regulations, including just cause eviction and habitability requirements beyond existing strong protections under state law, increase administrative burdens and strain resources without effectively addressing bad actors. These approaches risk harming responsible housing providers while failing to achieve meaningful improvements in affordability or access.

Efforts should instead focus on increasing housing production and ensuring tenants are informed about, and able to access, existing robust tenant protections.

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# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026 HOMELESSNESS



The causes of homelessness are multi-faceted and require a comprehensive, regionally coordinated approach.

There is an urgent need for immediate, safe, and structured interim shelter solutions to address current impacts on our community while long-term housing and service strategies are implemented. We support policies, partnerships, and funding that expand housing options and provide the services necessary to address the root causes of homelessness.

We support a differentiated response that recognizes the distinct needs of individuals facing economic displacement, behavioral health challenges, addiction, and chronic unsheltered homelessness.

While housing is essential, it is not sufficient for many experiencing chronic homelessness, serious mental illness, or substance use disorder. Public policy should prioritize approaches that pair housing and shelter with appropriate behavioral health services, case management, treatment access, and clear expectations that support long-term stability and community safety.

## **Enforcement, Services, and Accountability**

Addressing unlawful behavior is not the criminalization of homelessness.

We support:

- Lawful enforcement of camping, trespass, and other public safety violations when safe shelter, treatment pathways, or other appropriate placements are available, while ensuring access to services that address mental illness and substance use
- Law enforcement efforts to address property crime, violent crime, and unsafe health conditions throughout the community
- Conservatorship reform and programs to ensure individuals unable to care for themselves receive appropriate care and treatment
- Funding tied to measurable outcomes and accountability, including reductions in unsheltered homelessness, increased treatment engagement, improved housing retention, reduced returns to homelessness, and decreased impacts on public safety and neighborhood conditions

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## Shelter, Services, and Funding

Access to shelter and services must be the first step toward stability.

We support:

- Aggressive local and regional efforts to secure funding for shelter and wraparound services
- Increased investment in behavioral health services, including mental health and substance use treatment
- County support for proven local programs focused on shelter, prevention, and long-term solutions
- Safe, structured short- and long-term interim solutions that reduce impacts on the broader community

## Housing Solutions

Expanding housing options is essential to addressing homelessness.

We support:

- Increased production of housing, particularly for low-income residents
- A full continuum of responses, prioritizing permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and other evidence-based interventions that deliver strong outcomes per public dollar. Interim models should be evaluated case by case based on cost-effectiveness, outcomes, and their ability to move individuals toward long-term stability
- Alternative interim placements that are designed to not inadvertently disrupt eligibility or priority for permanent housing resources—temporary placements that weaken access to permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing risk creating short-term solutions that undermine long-term stability
- Protection of dedicated local housing funds
- Partnerships to build or repurpose shelter, stabilization settings, and housing with integrated services, supported by clear performance expectations tied to housing retention, treatment engagement, and reduced neighborhood impacts

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## ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



The extraordinary quality of our region's natural environment is critical to both our quality of life and the strength of our local economy, particularly in tourism and recreation.

Effective resiliency planning must include our region's energy and natural resources with a clear understanding of threats and opportunities.

Recent droughts and wildfires highlight the need for sustainable resource management as well as land use, management practices, and building standards that minimize the impact of natural disasters. These events have become a part of living in this region and require sustained investment in response, mitigation, and preparedness for fires, floods, and earthquakes.

### **Minimizing Risk of Fires**

Wildfires continue to increase in frequency and intensity, requiring sustained local action.

We support:

- Implementation of the Chamber's Wildfire Action Plan
- Vegetation management and reduction of combustible materials
- Land use practices that reduce risk in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas
- Continued improvements to the electric transmission and distribution system

Hardening of the electric distribution system is critical in reducing wildfire risk and the impact of Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events. With losses in the millions of dollars per PSPS event, continued investment in grid hardening, microgrids, and backup energy systems is essential.

### **Water and Environment**

A reliable water supply is essential to the health of our community and economy.

We support:

- Expanding the region's water supply through recycling, storage, and efficiency measures



- Protection of natural resources that support key industries
- Sustainable water use and long-term resource management

Aligning Sonoma Water's rates and budgets with the true cost of maintaining the system is necessary to avoid higher long-term costs from deferred maintenance. We support proactive infrastructure investment and public education on the need for appropriate rate structures.

## Clean Energy

Transitioning to a clean energy future requires both public investment and private sector innovation.

We support:

- Incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Investment in grid modernization and expanded energy delivery capacity
- Policies that support broader adoption of solar and clean energy technologies

The reduction of solar incentives has created a significant chilling in the rate of solar adoption. Federal, state, and local governments should provide financial incentives to individuals and businesses to support the widespread adoption of solar energy.

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We support investments that will strengthen access to quality early child care, early education, and K-12 education; address the teacher shortage; and align postsecondary programs with employer needs,...

...including a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and CTE (career technical education) opportunities. CTE opportunities for students are crucial to integrate real world examples and opportunities that help all students graduate from high school college- and career-ready.

## **Early Care & Education**

Access to high-quality, affordable child care is critical to workforce participation and economic competitiveness, yet it remains out of reach for many families. The child care crisis is impacting both current workforce productivity and long-term economic growth. Investments in early education are proven to improve school readiness, reduce achievement gaps, and deliver long-term benefits across education, health, and economic outcomes.

We support:

- Expansion of access to high-quality, affordable early care and preschool
- Strengthening California's birth-through-third-grade (P-3) mixed delivery system
- Continued investment in child care to support working families and workforce participation

Failure to invest meaningfully in child care will further strain the workforce and hinder long-term economic opportunity.

## **K-12 Education & Postsecondary Access**

Strong alignment across the education continuum is essential to preparing students for future success. Early engagement in STEM and improved preschool-through-third-grade alignment are critical building blocks, while high school pathways must connect to real career opportunities.

We support:

- Alignment of A-G requirements with CTE and other meaningful options to ensure multiple pathways to high school completion and career success
- Stronger connections between K-12 education and regional workforce needs

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- Equitable access to resources, including broadband and technology
- Collaboration across the cradle-to-career continuum
- Use of data, including YouthTruth survey results, to improve curriculum, school culture, and professional development

## Higher Education

Higher education institutions are critical drivers of economic development and workforce readiness. Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University play a key role in preparing residents for employment, entrepreneurship, and career advancement.

We support:

- Sustained funding for higher education
- Stronger collaboration between education institutions and employers
- Expansion of certificate, degree, and workforce training programs aligned with regional economic needs

## Youth Mental Health

Youth mental health is at crisis levels and is directly impacting educational outcomes and workforce readiness. Rising rates of anxiety, depression, and disengagement require immediate attention and sustained investment.

We support:

- Increased funding for school-based mental health services, including screenings and suicide prevention
- Expanded social-emotional learning and wellness programs
- Extended learning opportunities to address learning loss and strengthen student engagement

Our education systems must prioritize student well-being to ensure long-term success.

## School Safety

Safe schools are foundational to student success. Effective school safety requires evidence-based approaches, adequate resources, and coordinated implementation.

We support:

- Implementation of evidence-based school safety programs grounded in prevention, intervention, and support
- Balanced approaches that incorporate both School Resource Officers and restorative justice practices
- Adequate and sustained investment in school safety programs
- Rapid implementation of safety measures to address immediate risks

In the near term, schools must ensure:

- Relief for educators who are expected to manage safety issues without adequate support
- Clear protocols to address violent behavior
- Protection of students from on-campus threats
- Consistent, dedicated on-campus safety and support resources

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# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026 **TRANSPORTATION**



Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve our transportation infrastructure, including securing funding to maintain and upgrade long-neglected roads. Continued investment is essential...

...to support economic growth, improve mobility, and enhance quality of life.

We support transportation policies and funding that increase mobility, relieve congestion, expand alternative commute options, and strengthen coordination across agencies to create a more connected and competitive regional system. Transportation funding sources must be maintained as this is critical to our economic success. The elimination of gas and other taxes, while attractive short-term options in times of economic hardship, create significant funding shortages to complete critical infrastructure projects. Funding should ensure long-term stability of our roads, bridges, and infrastructure, all necessary to support a vibrant economy.

## **Airline Attraction**

We support:

- Expansion of flights and destinations at the Charles M. Schulz–Sonoma County Airport
- Modernization and terminal expansion to meet growing demand

Each new route generates significant economic value—estimated at \$23 million and approximately 70 jobs per route—and strengthens the region's ability to attract employers and support tourism.

## **Road Improvements**

We support:

- Continued investment in city and rural road repair and maintenance to improve safety and traffic flow
- Reconstruction of Highway 37 to address sea level rise, reduce congestion, and improve safety
- Alternative financing and project delivery methods, including public-private partnerships, to accelerate critical infrastructure projects



Growing housing demand and projected traffic increases—from 45,000 daily trips in 2013 to 58,000 by 2040—underscore the urgency of these investments.

## **SMART**

SMART plays an important role in the future of transportation in the North Bay, supporting freight, commuter, and recreational travel.

We support:

- Transparency and fiscal responsibility
- Investments to improve the customer experience and increase ridership
- Solutions to reduce transfer times and address first and last-mile gaps
- Strategic expansion, including the Larkspur connection and east-west regional connectors

## **Safety**

Safe transportation systems are both a public safety and economic priority. Safer roads and improved pedestrian infrastructure enhance tourism, support local businesses, and improve overall community well-being.

We support:

- Policy and infrastructure improvements to reduce fatal and serious accidents
- Implementation of Vision Zero strategies to improve roadway safety

## **Climate & Infrastructure Investment**

We support:

- Investment in infrastructure to meet the state's zero-emission vehicle goals
- Ensuring the energy grid is prepared to support increased electrification
- Development of alternative transportation funding mechanisms for critical transportation and infrastructure projects as fuel tax revenues decline
- Opportunities for walkable and bikeable communities to support climate goals, vibrant downtowns, and reduced system strain

We support policies that are consistent with the creation of a vibrant urban core, significantly increased housing for all income levels, a more diversified and inclusive economy, and a strong workforce. We believe this will create a healthy business environment and thriving community for all. We will endorse policies and practices that support business start-up, innovation, expansion and attraction. We believe that the best policies use a data driven, evidence-based approach.

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The Metro Chamber uses its Policy Platform to inform communication with elected leaders and members, and to guide its engagement on community efforts.

Thank you to the member representatives of the Metro Chamber's Advocacy Council, who volunteered their time and expertise in the establishment of this Local and State Policy Platform.

# LOCAL AND STATE POLICY PLATFORM 2026 TOURISM



Sonoma County's allure as a global destination for quality wines, craft beer, outdoor recreation, and culinary excellence is a critical driver of the region's economic success.

Large employers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs all rely on the strength of the local tourism economy, which generates over two billion spent annually by visitors to Sonoma County, and provides amenities and recreation opportunities for locals. While Sonoma County has a diverse economy, tourism remains foundational. Continued investment in the tourism industry, arts, and special events is essential to sustain growth and competitiveness at the local, regional, and state levels.

We support:

- Expansion of hotel capacity, particularly extended-stay and conference-oriented accommodations
- Development of full-service and luxury properties that attract high-value visitors and increase Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and Business Improvement Area (BIA) revenues
- Investment in events, venues, and cultural assets that strengthen Santa Rosa and Sonoma County as a world-class destination

Limited conference and event space currently restricts the region's ability to compete for large meetings and events that generate significant economic impact.

Vacation rentals are a meaningful component of the tourism economy and should be evaluated through a data-driven lens.

We support:

- Policies that rely on objective data to distinguish actual impacts from perception
- Balanced regulation that protects the community while maintaining the economic benefits of this sector



We support policies that are consistent with the creation of a vibrant urban core, significantly increased housing for all income levels, a more diversified and inclusive economy, and a strong workforce. We believe this will create a healthy business environment and thriving community for all. We will endorse policies and practices that support business start-up, innovation, expansion and attraction. We believe that the best policies use a data driven, evidence-based approach.

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