



This report takes as its starting point the 1992 San Mateo County Human Services Strategic Plan. Developed over a period of a year by residents, service providers, and government officials from throughout the county, the 1992 plan identified a number of themes and related strategic directions to guide services delivery over a five-year period. In February 1998 the Shared Undertaking to Change the Community to Enable Self-Sufficiency (SUCCESS) Advisory Committee established a Strategic Plan Subcommittee to look at where the county is now, how far the county has come since 1992, and how far the county still needs to go. To this end, this report presents findings from surveys and interviews with service agencies and others throughout the community, as well as synthesizes data from a variety of sources.

Life is good for many in San Mateo County, and in many ways the quality of life for individuals and communities has improved since 1992. Compared to prior years and to the rest of the state, San Mateo County is doing better overall in income, education, employment, public safety, and health. However, some geographic areas and some ethnic and other groups have been left behind and are increasingly struggling to be able to remain in the county. It can be especially difficult to be poor when surrounded by affluence.

The 1990-1992 recession affected many in the county. Since then, the economy has been on the upswing and is booming. The resulting increase in jobs, together with the new wealth created at many high tech startups, has increased the disparity between the lowest and highest paying jobs, and put great pressure on the housing market. One of the biggest problems in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties is that housing is unaffordable for those with low and even moderate incomes --the average family cannot afford the average home.

The community has made a number of important strides since the 1992 plan was put in place. The SUCCESS welfare reform program was a direct outgrowth of the themes and directions identified by the community in developing the 1992 plan. The three themes relating to service philosophy, extending the boundaries of the service system, and customer focus are woven into the new programs and initiatives that have been put into place. The SUCCESS program incorporates the strategic directions identified in the plan, including training, decision-making based on shared values, a seamless service system, building public support, pursuing appropriate waivers and legislation, developing integrated single intake with multiple physical entry points, making services more accessible, using data for planning and operations, and expanding child care, affordable housing, and job training for the working poor.

Overall, the Strategic Plan accomplished what it intended. At the same time, it needs to be recognized that the federal and state focus on welfare reform influenced the implementation of the plan, just as the existence of the Strategic Plan influenced the county's approach to welfare reform. The SUCCESS program is the most tangible result of the Strategic Plan and represents the county's proactive response to welfare reform.

The design and implementation of SUCCESS has taken several years and much hard work on the part of Human Services Agency (HSA) staff and partners in the community. The development of the SMART client database during this time has facilitated data collection and access between HSA and its core agencies. SUCCESS has helped to dramatically reduce the welfare caseloads in the county, working with welfare clients and others to take the best first steps on the path toward self-sufficiency.

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One of the most striking outcomes of the 1992 plan is the increased collaboration between public agencies, private non-profits, and others in the private sector. One stop services with multiple entry points have been developed. Services are more comprehensive in scope and focus on the whole person. Services are strength-based instead of deficit based. There is a focus on employability. Many of these trends reflect national directions in social services. At the same time, San Mateo County can be proud of its recognition as a leader in human service delivery systems.

This report provides the findings from a community survey, questionnaires for the co-chairs of the Strategic Plan design workgroups, and stakeholder interviews, as well as findings on the trends in social and economic quality of life indicators. In brief, the subcommittee found:

### **Community Survey**

- The results of the 194 community surveys of 1500 sent that were returned indicate that much has been accomplished through collaboration among community, government and business partners, while much remains to be done. For example, the community has done well in providing programs for job training, employment readiness, and basic skills, but needs to develop more programs that teach parenting and self-improvement, have a focus on prevention and early intervention, and strengthen an individual's or family's support.
- The community has made good strides in treating clients with respect and developing a service delivery system with multiple entry points. There has been very good progress on developing effective partnerships among government, non-profit and private sector organizations and individuals throughout the San Mateo community.
- Problem areas for the community are the lack of affordable housing and the difficulty of accessing affordable and high quality child care.

### **Co-Chair Questionnaires**

- The results of the questionnaires for the co-chairs of the workgroups involved in the development of the 1992 Human Services Strategic Plan indicate that in general, they felt that their workgroups were effective and met the established expectations and objectives. Some responded that they saw the workgroups as the beginning of true community collaboration that actually went beyond the Strategic Plan.
- The workgroups understood their charge and all produced a work product and/or recommendations. For the most part the recommendations they made were implemented and became the basis for the SUCCESS service delivery model.
- The majority said the plan was very comprehensive and that, overall, the community has been well served by the plan and that it accomplished what it intended.

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

- Approximately 40 key informants were interviewed to gather additional information about the sorts of programs their agencies had initiated since 1992 in areas related to those identified in the 1992 plan. Agencies included government, core agencies and other key community-based organizations, education, business, transportation, housing, advocacy and labor groups.
- All agencies cited a number of new partnerships and collaboratives involving public and private agencies since 1992.

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- There were new programs in all of the areas identified, especially in the areas of prevention, early intervention and parenting skills. Other areas with new programs included affordable housing, accessible and affordable child care, self-improvement skills, basic skills training, employment skills training, job training for the working poor, strengthening the support environment, self-sufficiency, and a system with multiple entry points.
  - Most agencies indicated that their agency has a plan. The vast majority of stakeholders indicated that the 1992 plan tied in with their own agency plan. Several agencies, especially those that work closely with HSA, said that their plans were directly affected by the 1992 plan. Others said it was difficult to know. In some ways the 1992 plan captured the spirit of and codified collaboration and change that was already there.

## Universal Outcomes

The 1992 Strategic Plan identified a set of measurable outcomes to provide focus for the plan. Three areas were identified.

### **Individual Self-sufficiency:**

The 1992 Strategic Plan called for an increase in individual self-sufficiency (education, employment, income, housing, dependent care, health, nutrition and transportation). In general, there has been improvement in these areas for many residents of the county. However, some regions and subpopulations within the county have not benefitted as much as others. The focus in welfare reform has resulted in more help for those on welfare but has had less impact on the working poor.

### **Family Strength:**

The 1992 Strategic Plan called for an increase in family strength (less family violence, less child neglect/abuse, less homelessness, more support for children, greater involvement of parents in children's education). Overall, these indicators have also showed improvement since 1992.

### **Community Health:**

The 1992 Strategic Plan called for improvements in community health (increases in the job base, workforce preparation, affordable housing, health status, and public transportation and decreases in unemployment, school dropouts, malnutrition, and crime). Although these community outcomes are affected by many factors outside the human services system, the 1992 plan identified the importance of improvement in these areas. Overall, the San Mateo community has improved in all areas except affordable housing.

The subcommittee examined the data that was available related to these universal outcomes. The subcommittee suggests developing baseline indicators and tracking relevant indicators over time. Key findings are provided below.

- **Employment and the Economy.** The county economy is vibrant and growing. The unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the nation, having peaked with the recession in 1992 and since dropped dramatically. Since 1992, employee productivity has consistently risen at a higher rate than the rest of the state. Although there has been strong growth in the higher paying occupations, there has been increasing wage disparity between the higher and lower paying jobs. Approximately half of the anticipated job openings pay an entry wage less than \$10 per hour. There has also been an increase in the contingent workforce, which offers less job security and benefits than traditional jobs.
- **Income.** The county median income has been steadily rising since 1992 and is one of the

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highest in the state. At the same time, welfare caseloads have dropped dramatically, twice as much as the state as a whole. But exiting welfare does not guarantee self-sufficiency. The typical welfare client who leaves welfare for a job earns almost \$10 per hour. Although this puts a family of three well above the poverty level, it is only half of what is needed to live on and less than a third of the median income in the county. Because of the high cost of living, many families still need to rely on public or private assistance even after they leave the welfare rolls.

- **Affordable housing.** Probably the biggest challenge facing the county is housing. With the booming economy, housing demand has far outpaced supply and as a result, home ownership and even rentals are increasingly unaffordable. A family earning the median income cannot afford to buy a median priced home, and low-income families are hard pressed to afford the average rent.
- **Homelessness.** Although homelessness may be expected to increase as the housing market tightens, it is difficult to measure. According to the most recent figures, the number of homeless children decreased between 1994 and 1996, although the number of homeless adults increased. Real progress has come in the increasing collaborative focus on homeless issues, including the opening of a year-round emergency shelter just this fall.
- **Child well-being.** The child abuse rate in San Mateo County has dropped since 1992, in contrast with the statewide child abuse rate, which has risen during that period. In addition, the percentage of children in foster care has also decreased in San Mateo County in contrast with the state trend. The county also has an excellent record in placing children into permanent homes when needed without unnecessary delay or moving from one foster home to another. The Legislative Analyst's Office assigned San Mateo County the highest score on an index of overall child protection.
- **Child care.** Child care is costly, with the average cost for licensed care higher than the state average. Affordable quality child care is in great demand. Although there are a number of publicly funded programs for CalWORKs clients and for the working poor, the demand exceeds the supply and most programs have long waiting lists. The Child Care Coordinating Council is completing a countywide child care needs assessment to assist the local Partnership Council in establishing child care priorities.
- **Education.** The high school dropout rate has consistently declined since 1992. To some extent this mirrors state and national trends; however, the San Mateo County dropout rate has consistently been lower than in the rest of the state. The percentage of high school graduates who meet the requirements for entrance to the University of California or California State University has steadily increased since 1992 and remains higher than the percentage statewide. Within the county these rates vary, and several school-based Healthy Start collaboratives have been established to provide additional services and support to children and their families.
- **Health.** Most of the health indicators in San Mateo County are better than the rest of the state and nation. In part this reflects the high median income and general affluence in the community. Teen births are decreasing, and infant mortality is low overall. However, there are discrepancies by income and region within the county. For example, infant mortality in the African American community is significantly higher than for other ethnic groups. Low income residents report health care to be less accessible than do others in the county. There are a large number of uninsured children who are potentially eligible for Medi-Cal or insurance under the new Healthy Families program, which is under-enrolled statewide.

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- **Public safety.** The rates of overall crime and of violent crime have been consistently dropping in San Mateo County since 1992 and remain much lower than statewide crime rates. The juvenile arrest rate is slightly higher than the rest of the state, although the rate of violent crime among juveniles has decreased in recent years. The incidence of domestic violence is also lower than that statewide.
  - **Public transportation.** Because of the costs of car ownership, low-income individuals are over-represented on public transportation. Ridership on public transportation has increased since 1992, and SamTrans has worked closely with HSA to ensure that transportation needs are addressed in welfare reform planning. The use of Paratransit Redi-Wheels to serve those with special needs has dramatically increased.

In sum the 1992 Human Services Strategic Plan has served the San Mateo community well. The challenge in the upcoming years is to develop community consensus about the county's goals for children, their families, and other adults including older adults; identify social indicators to track progress toward these goals; and develop measures of accountability so the county knows what works. The county needs affordable housing, prevention and early intervention programs for children and families, self-sufficiency programs for adults, access to all for quality child care, and supportive services programs for those at risk. The community needs to work together to identify and tackle these challenges.



## **Strategic Plan Subcommittee of the SUCCESS Advisory Committee**

The Strategic Plan Subcommittee was formed by the Shared Undertaking to Change the Community to Enable Self-Sufficiency (SUCCESS) Advisory Committee in February, 1998, with two purposes:

- (1) to develop a status report outlining the accomplishments and status of elements in the 1992 San Mateo County Human Services Strategic Plan; and
- (2) to develop recommendations for a process for developing a new Strategic Plan.

This report fulfills the first purpose of the subcommittee. In February 1999 the subcommittee anticipates completing its recommendations for a process to develop a new plan.

Committee members include volunteers from SUCCESS Advisory Committee and 3 additional Human Services Agency (HSA) staff representing programs and regions within HSA. Members include co-chairs John Kelly, Samaritan House; Carol Tanzi, Carol A Tanzi A.S.I.D. & Associates; and Elsa Dawson, HSA. Other members include Beth Curran (United Way); Sofia Gomez (HSA); Nancy Goodban (HSA consultant); Janet Hofmann (Community Information Program); Michael Katrichak (HSA); Ruth Nagler (San Mateo County 2000); Evelyn Peel (League of Women Voters of San Mateo County); Ed Rodriguez (Service League); Beth Ross (Redwood City 2000); Carlos Valenzuela (Family Service Agency Family Loan Program); Donna Woher (HSA Process Consultant); and Marina Yu (HSA). The committee identified a number of assumptions in approaching its work:

- Implementation of the current strategic plan is still underway;
- Social and political (state and federal) forces have shaped and continue to shape the implementation of the current plan, just as the plan has influenced human services delivery;
- It is necessary to embrace a county-wide and community-building focus in evaluating and creating strategic planning processes;
- The focus is individual and family self-sufficiency; and
- There will always be a portion of the population that will not become self-sufficient and there will need to be continuing efforts to provide services to these individuals.

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## **Description of Review Process**

A summary of the 1992 Human Services Strategic Plan is found in Appendix A. The Strategic Plan Subcommittee undertook four tasks to gather data about the implementation of the 1992 Strategic Plan, and this report represents the findings from these tasks:

- (1) In May 1998, the committee contacted the 14 co-chairs of the workgroups charged with implementing the strategic directions identified in the plan.
- (2) In June, a survey was mailed to 1,500 community members and HSA staff to assess their perceptions of how well the community had implemented the plan.
- (3) In August and September, approximately 40 key informant stakeholders from county departments and community agencies were interviewed about specific programs they had implemented or were planning, related to the strategic directions.
- (4) Baseline data on universal outcomes was compiled and analyzed.



## Community Survey Results

In June, 1998 a 2-page survey was sent out to 1,500 individuals. All 850 San Mateo County employees received the survey. In addition, 650 surveys were sent to employers and the business community, education, transportation, faith-based groups, advocacy groups, and other community based organizations.

One hundred ninety four surveys were returned for a 13% return rate. The return rate for county staff was 15% for community members it was 11%. Because of the low return rate, and any generalizations from this sample to the population surveyed must be interpreted with caution.

The plan covers the delivery of all human services throughout the county. The services and outcomes they are intended to impact are beyond the domain of any one organization or local jurisdiction. For instance, 60% of those responding stated that the community needs to improve the accessibility of affordable housing and 36% see a need for improved child care for the working poor.

The survey results indicate that much has been accomplished through collaboration among community, government and business partners, while much remains to be done. For example, the community has done well in providing programs for job training, employment readiness, and basic skills, but needs to develop more programs that teach parenting and self improvement, have a focus on early intervention, and strengthen an individual's or family's support. There was a fairly high percentage of "don't know" answers, suggesting the need for community education on the status of human services programs.

### Areas of strength included:

- Basic skills training in the community
- Employment skills training in the community
- Job training programs for the working poor
- Treating clients with respect
- Service delivery system with multiple entry points
- Partnership among government, non-profit and private sector organizations and individuals throughout the San Mateo County community

### Areas needing improvement included:

- Affordable housing
- Accessibility of affordable child care
- Public education efforts to change the public's negative perceptions of human services clients
- Programs that teach parenting skills and self improvement skills (family functioning)
- Programs that promote self-sufficiency
- Programs that focus on prevention and early intervention
- Programs that strengthen the family's or individual's support environment

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## **Co-Chair Questionnaire Results**

On May 29, a letter was sent to the co-chairs of the workgroups involved in the 1992 Strategic Plan development. Generally, the co-chairs felt their workgroups were effective and met the established expectations and objectives. Some responded that they saw the workgroups as the beginning of true community collaboration that actually went beyond the Strategic Plan. The group participants had an interest in making a change in the service delivery system and came prepared to participate. The workgroups understood their charge and all produced a work product and/or recommendations.

The co-chairs responded that for the most part the recommendations made by the workgroups were implemented and their recommendations became the basis for the SUCCESS service delivery model. The process followed by the workgroups as a whole helped the participants understand community needs and the roles and perspectives of others in the workgroup. The co-chairs expressed the opinion that everyone in the workgroup was able to hear and debate different perspectives, and even though all did not agree on certain elements they managed to come to agreement on the majority of the issues. As a whole the Strategic Plan had an effect on the jobs of all the co-chairs except one, who reported that the plan only affected clients.

The co-chairs were asked to think about their respective workgroups and ask themselves where HSA could have done a better job. Some of the responses were: taking less time planning and more time developing implementation plans; engaging more community members and listening to what the community was really asking for; soliciting participation from other county agencies; following through with recommendations or, if recommendations were not to be implemented, sending a letter to the members, especially community participants, explaining why.

The responses to the question, "How could the human services provider community have done a better job?" included: politically organizing to be a more influential voice in the community; having better communication with religious organizations bringing their voice into the whole discussion; providing more specific information to help design a better program; clearly and emphatically articulating needs and having better knowledge of the big picture; engaging more community members; and participating more.

The respondents were asked their opinion of what was missing from the plan. The majority of respondents said the plan was very comprehensive and didn't identify anything significant missing from the plan.

As a whole, respondents think that, overall, the population has been served by the plan and that the plan accomplished what it intended.

## **Stakeholder Interview Results**

In August and September 1998, approximately 40 key informants were interviewed to gather additional information about the sorts of programs their agencies had initiated since 1992 in areas related to those identified in the 1992 plan. They were also interviewed about their own planning efforts, and plans were collected from those that had them. Agencies included: county and state government; the core service agencies and other key community-based organizations that provide human services in San Mateo County; and education, business, transportation, housing, advocacy and labor groups.

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As seen below, agencies have developed a number of new programs and initiatives, including collaboratives and partnerships, in the areas identified in the 1992 plan. These programs were not necessarily developed as a direct result of the strategic plan; in some ways the 1992 plan helped to codify some of the trends that were already taking place in the county, including customer-focused service and increased collaboration. Key informants also had several recommendations on how to make sure the upcoming plan could help them in their agency planning process.

One area of focus in the 1992 Strategic Plan was the development of public/private partnerships. All agencies cited a number of new partnerships and collaboratives involving public and private agencies since 1992. Some key new partnerships for children include: Healthy Start collaboratives throughout the county; the Prenatal to Three Initiative which began in 1996 to offer families on MediCal home-based assessments and a range of services to ensure good development of the infants and toddlers; and the Peninsula Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, which administers federal Family Preservation and Support Funds and supports collaboratives in six cities. The New Beginning Coalition focuses on the needs of older adults and adults with disabilities. HSA has developed collaborations with the 7 core agencies and established the multi-disciplinary Family Self-Sufficiency Teams under the SUCCESS program. In the employment and training area there are a number of new collaboratives, including School to Career and One Stop Career Centers. The San Mateo County Economic Development Agency (SAMCEDA) established the Economic Vitality Partnership Steering Committee as a private/public partnership. In the area of homeless services, new partnerships include the Homeless Continuum of Care Collaborative and the Winter Shelter Task Force.

The interviews included a number of questions about new programs developed since 1992 in the areas identified in the plan. The number of new programs in each area is summarized below.

- **Affordable housing:** Six agencies listed a total of 7 programs.
- **Accessible and affordable child care:** Twelve agencies listed a total of 19 programs and initiatives.
- **Prevention and early intervention:** This was one of the richest areas of new programming, with 24 different agencies listing a total of 54 programs and initiatives.
- **Parenting skills:** Almost every agency developed new programming in this area, with 31 agencies listing 31 new programs.
- **Self-improvement skills:** Twenty agencies listed 29 programs.
- **Basic skills training:** Eighteen agencies listed 29 programs.
- **Employment skills training:** Twelve agencies had set up 16 new programs.
- **Job training for the working poor:** Nine agencies cited 11 programs in this area.
- **Strengthening the support environment:** Fifteen agencies listed 26 programs in this area.
- **Self-sufficiency:** Ten agencies listed 13 specific new programs in this area, but almost every agency indicated that this was a focus of many if not most of their programs.
- **Education of the public:** Only 9 agencies had done new work in this area, listing 9 programs.
- **System with multiple entry points:** Fourteen agencies responded that their services were more accessible through an increased number of entry points, expanded locations, or more flexible hours.
- **Information on how clients are treated:** Nineteen of the agencies collect this data.

There were also questions about the respondent's agency planning process. Many of the agencies were able to provide copies of their plans.

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- **Does your agency have a plan to guide service delivery?** Most agencies cited in response to this question that their agency has a plan. Agency plans varied in implementation timelines (5 years to 1 year) and types of plans (operational vs. strategic). Inference: Community agencies (public and private non profit) define the word "plan" differently. They may benefit from having a shared language and planning process and tools.
  - **Are there any components of the 1992 San Mateo County Human Services Strategic Plan that complement your own organization's plan?** Fifteen agencies answered in the affirmative. Another 3 said no, 4 didn't know, and 2 said it was inapplicable. Some overlapping elements cited included delivery of services, efforts to ensure outreach, one-stop system and tie in with SUCCESS.
  - **Did the 1992 San Mateo County Human Services Strategic Plan affect any of your internal planning or program development?** Several agencies, especially those that work closely with HSA, said that their plans were affected by the 1992 plan. Others said it was difficult to know. In some ways the 1992 plan captured the spirit of and codified collaboration and change that was already there.
  - **How could an overall strategic plan for human services help you with program development?**
    - It should be community oriented, broad and inclusive, with public input and recognition of other plans, highlighting existing collaborations throughout the community.
    - It needs to address the needs of the working poor (including CalWORKs graduates and those who have never been on CalWORKs).
    - It needs to be marketable, with a small number of key principles that can be "shopped around".
    - Recipients need to participate in plan development and truly be listened to.

### **General Comments**

Respondents suggested that it is important to look at the broad trends in social services delivery and how they tie in with the implementation of the 1992 plan. For example, compared to previous decades there is now more focus on the consumer. The perspective taken by the service provider is more strength-based rather than deficit-based and there is a greater emphasis on the whole person (including psychosocial needs). There is increased collaboration between public agencies, private non-profits, and others in the private sector. One-stop services with multiple entry points are encouraged by funding sources. Services are more comprehensive in scope with a greater focus on employability and "work first".



The 1992 Strategic Plan identified a number of expected universal outcomes:

- Increase in individual self-sufficiency (education, employment, income, housing, dependent care, health, nutrition and transportation);
- Increase in family strength (less child neglect/abuse, less homelessness, more support for children, greater involvement of parents in children's education); and
- Improvements in community health (increases in the job base, workforce preparation, affordable housing, health status, and transportation and decreases in unemployment, school dropouts, malnutrition, and crime).

The subcommittee examined available baseline and trend data in each of these areas. A number of existing reference documents and sources were used. One key source of data used was the *Community Assessment - Health and Quality of Life in San Mateo County*, which is a project of the Healthy Community Collaborative of San Mateo County. Collaborative membership includes the Health Services and Human Services Agencies of San Mateo County, the Hospital Consortium of San Mateo County, the Health Plan of San Mateo, the Peninsula Community Foundation, United Way of San Mateo County, and the Peninsula Library System Community Information Program. This Community Assessment, undertaken in spring and summer of 1998, was available in draft form in September 1998. It includes findings from a random sample of 1,000 county residents interviewed by telephone, a review of existing secondary data sources, and five community panel discussion groups attended by 45 participants. Similar surveys were also conducted in Santa Clara County and throughout California and used as comparisons.

Reference documents for the following sections also included:

- **Strategic Plan for Drug and Alcohol Services**, published in July 1998 by the Human Services Agency Alcohol and Drug Services;
- **Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan 1999-2003**, published by the San Mateo County Home Consortium in May 1998;
- **California Counties: A Look at Program Performance**, published in May 1998 by the California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO);
- **Indicators for a Sustainable San Mateo County**, published in May 1998 by Sustainable San Mateo County;
- **San Mateo County Housing Needs Analysis Final Report**, published in January 1998 and prepared by Economic and Planning Systems, Inc;
- **Growing Together or Drifting Apart**, by Chris Benner, published by Working Partnerships in January 1998;
- **Taft Healthy Start Collaborative First Annual Report**, published in November 1997;
- **SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan FY 1997/98 to FY 2006/07** published by SamTrans in September 1997;
- **The Economic Impact of Child Care in San Mateo County**, published in July 1997 by the National Economic Development and Law Center, Economics Online, and the Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County;
- San Mateo County Economic Development Agency (SAMCEDA) Economic Vitality Partnership **Indicators and Outlook**, published in June 1997;

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- **Shock Absorbers in the Flexible Economy** by Chris Benner, published by Working Partnerships in May 1996;
  - **49ers Academy Healthy Start** grant application;
  - **Strategic Plan for Services to Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities**, published by the New Beginning Coalition in 1995;
  - **City of San Mateo Consolidated Plan 1995-1999**, published by the City of San Mateo in July 1995;
  - **Child Care Master Plan of San Mateo County (1992)**; and
  - **California County Data Books (1997 and 1995)** published by Children Now.

Other data sources included HSA, the state Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division, the state Department of Education, and the RAND Corporation.

As will be seen in the following pages, in general San Mateo County is doing very well compared to the rest of the state and the nation in social indicators related to safety, health, employment, education, and welfare. San Mateo County has a vibrant economy, low unemployment, a low crime rate, low child abuse rates, and has succeeded in reducing welfare caseloads. Both the high school dropout rate and the teen pregnancy rate are low. However, one major problem area is affordable housing. Although a little over 50% of residents own their own homes, the current high cost of housing puts home ownership out of reach of many residents. Apartments are difficult to find because of low vacancy rates and becoming increasingly difficult to afford. Additional detail in each area is provided in the following pages.

### **Employment and the Economy**

The county economy is a powerhouse of diverse industries, high quality jobs, and strong growth. The gross regional product, which is used as a measure of economic vitality because it is the broadest measure of output of goods and services, grew by 18% between 1990 and 1996. The recession was relatively mild, and since then the economy has rebounded strongly. Consistent with this data, in the Community Assessment 55% of the respondents rate the strength and growth of the local economy as "excellent" or "very good" and another 34% rate it as "good." Overall, only 11% of the general population rate the economy as "fair or poor." On the other hand, almost a third of those under 185% of the poverty line rate the economy as only "fair" or "poor," showing almost three times as much concern as the average resident.

As can be seen from the following chart of employee output, productivity has grown more quickly in San Mateo County than in the rest of the State.

*(Data source: SAMCEDA Economic Vitality Partnership Indicators and Outlook)*

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The San Mateo County economy is diversified and strong. Even during the recession of 1992 and 1993, the unemployment rate consistently remained below state unemployment rates as can be seen from the chart below. Since 1992 there has been a 20% increase in jobs in the county,

and there are currently only 3 job seekers for every job compared to the statewide norm of 7 job seekers for each job.

Consistent with the county's 2.8% unemployment rate, in the Community Assessment a full 80% of San Mateo County residents rate local employment opportunities as "excellent/very good/good." Only 20% of the population rates employment opportunities as "fair" or "poor," in contrast with the statewide survey where overall 40% gave the "fair/poor" response. However, a socio-demographic breakdown shows that in San Mateo County, 44% of those with low incomes, and 28% of those with only a high school education, see employment opportunities as "fair" or "poor." It is clear that the economic boom is not paying equal dividends to all residents.

In line with these perceptions, Working Partnerships reports that in Santa Clara County there is an increasing disparity in wages. The ratio of earnings for top corporate executives compared to that of production workers in the electronics industry climbed from 42:1 in 1991 to 220:1 in 1996. Hourly wages for 75% of the workforce were lower when adjusted for inflation than in 1989 prior to the last recession. Although San Mateo County has a more diversified mix of industries than does Santa Clara County, the same sort of trends would be expected.

In addition, in the last decade there has been an increasing number of temporary, free-lance, contract, and part-time workers, known as the contingent workforce. This has allowed corporations the flexibility to compete in a fast moving global economy, but for many workers it has reduced their job stability and access to health and other benefits. This national trend is even

more pronounced in Silicon Valley. Many workers choose this flexibility, but others do not. These are difficult numbers to pin down, since the statistics are not tracked by the government. Working Partnerships estimates that in 1996, 27% to 40% of employees in Santa Clara County were contingent workers, and that more than half of the net job growth in the previous 10 years was due to the growth in contingent employment.

A more in-depth look at occupational statistics can be seen by looking at the Employment Development Department (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID) data. The table below shows the 20 occupations with the greatest number of job openings (due to growth or separation) expected between 1994 and 2001 in San Mateo County. The table is sorted by the median expected hourly entry wage. That is, half the workers are expected to receive less than the median wage; the other half receive more.

Occupation	Median hourly entry wage	Median hourly wage	Number of openings
Waitpersons	\$5.15	\$5.56	2,380
Counter attendants - food	\$5.41	\$6.62	770
Retail sales (non-vehicle)	\$5.71	\$7.66	2,740
Janitors, cleaners - excluding maids	\$6.11	\$7.80	910
Cashiers	\$6.27	\$7.95	2,350
Receptionists, information clerks	\$8.56	\$10.32	1,180
General office clerks	\$8.61	\$10.66	2,040
Instructional aides	\$9.13	\$10.50	840
Truck drivers - light	\$9.24	\$12.04	880
General secretaries	\$11.72	\$14.27	1,510
Sales reps, scientific - excluding retail	\$13.07	\$18.65	1,140
Sales reps - non-scientific excluding retail	\$13.12	\$19.06	1,210
Systems analysts - electronic data processors	\$14.38	\$19.18	1,380
Computer engineers	\$14.41	\$26.01	1,950
Elementary teachers	\$14.77	\$19.08	850
Marketing, advertising, public relations managers	\$18.39	\$26.97	930
Computer programmers including aides	\$19.18	\$22.30	2,050
General managers and top executives	\$20.50	\$33.18	2,360
Financial managers	\$24.18	\$34.98	800
Engineer, math, and natural science	\$30.08	\$39.06	790
	<b>Average: \$12.90</b>	<b>Average: \$17.59</b>	<b>Total jobs: 29,060</b>

(Data sources: Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division: San Mateo

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*County Occupational Projections; 1996 4th Quarter Occupational Employment and Wage Data  
Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey Results; and California Wage Supplement*

It can be seen that of approximately 30,000 job openings expected between 1994 and 2001, the median entry wage varies from \$5.15 to \$30.08. Half the jobs have a median entry wage less than \$10 (average \$7). Another 11,000 jobs have a median entry wage between \$10 and \$20 (average \$15). About 4,000 jobs start with wages greater than \$20 (average \$25).

As seen from the key informant interviews, there has been an increased focus on training to ensure that county residents can compete in the rapidly changing work environment. Over the next year, SAMCEDA and HSA will be collaborating on the Job Creation Investment Fund program to begin to look more closely at the match between CalWORKs clients and the job market, with a focus on facilitating opportunities for upward mobility. It needs to be noted that even as upward mobility is facilitated for current low wage workers, there will always be a portion of the labor force that fills the low wage jobs.

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## Income

San Mateo County enjoys very high per capita income compared to the rest of the state and country. Since 1990, per capita income in the county has increased 4.2% a year, slightly more than the 4.0% annual increase exhibited by the United States overall. In 1996, San Mateo County's per capita income was the second highest of the 58 counties. The high per capita income reflects a highly skilled and educated workforce as well as a large number of well-paying jobs.

The high median income marks the halfway point -- half of all households earn more than the median, and half earn less. The annual median income for a family of four in San Mateo County held steady at \$49,900 in 1991 and 1992 while the county was coming out of the recession of the early 1990s. It has been rising steadily since then, from \$54,300 in 1993 to \$68,600 in 1998, but income has not kept pace with the cost of housing. The median income also masks the issues facing a household where two wage earners are required to make up family income, and those working at low wage jobs cannot meet the median income even with two wage earners. One job

paying \$33 per hour, or 2 wage earners who each earn \$15.50 per hour, are needed to earn the current median wage.

*(Data sources: SAMCEDA EVP Indicators and Outlook;  
federal Housing and Urban Development)*

As seen in the previous section, about half of the job openings are expected to be in the retail and service industry that provides goods and services for those with higher incomes. Another third of the jobs are professionals who are paid in the mid-range, while the remaining minority of jobs go to the better paid executives and top managers. The booming high tech industry provides well paying jobs for those who are qualified. Startups, and fast growing "gazelle" companies, with the good performance in the stock market over the past few years have produced a new class of very well to do individuals. The wages of those at the lower end have not kept up. The growing inequality concerns many community leaders, as firefighters, teachers, and police officers cannot afford to live in the communities where they work.

Reflecting this trend, 54% of those in the Community Assessment rate their personal financial situation as excellent/very good. Overall, only 16% of county residents say their situation is fair/poor. However, not surprisingly a full 61% of those with incomes under 185% of poverty rate their financial situation as fair/poor. In a related vein, only 8% of respondents indicate they are financially worse off now than a year ago, but the proportion rises to 22% for those under 185% of poverty level.

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Welfare caseloads peaked in January 1995 and have declined dramatically since then. The federal welfare reform law passed in August 1996 replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cash assistance program with the Transitional Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program. In August 1997, California passed legislation creating the CalWORKs program to implement TANF in California effective January 1998. In advance of national trends, one major outcome of the 1992 Human Services Strategic Planning Process was the development of the San Mateo County SUCCESS program. SUCCESS, which has been approved by the state as a welfare reform demonstration project, has focused on putting welfare clients to work. Together with the booming economy, this has resulted in major decreases in the welfare caseload, as can be seen from the chart below.

San Mateo County experienced the greatest per capita reduction in AFDC/TANF caseload of the 20 large counties between April 1995 and October 1997, as reported by the LAO. San Mateo County's caseload decreased by 42% while the statewide average decrease was only 20%. In addition, by May 1998, 59% of all CalWORKs families in the county were participating in work activities, as were a full 90% of two-parent families. San Mateo County was the only county to achieve the mandated federal work participation rate of 30% for all families and 75% for two-parent families. As of November 1998 in San Mateo County there are only 1,130 families with an adult receiving TANF. Those still on aid may have significant barriers to employment, as indicated by the fact that the average time on aid increased from 33 months to 40 months between June 1996 and June 1998.

The SUCCESS model was also extended to the General Assistance (GA) program, which primarily serves single adults, an increasing proportion of whom are disabled and not employable. San Mateo County's GA caseload fell from 746 in September 1996 to 403 in September 1998, with only 19% employable. In San Mateo County only 1 out of 1,000 residents receives GA, much lower than neighboring counties.

However, exiting the welfare rolls does not equate to self-sufficiency, defined as educationally, socially, psychologically, and financially able to deal with the demands of daily living without government assistance. Many families who leave public assistance remain eligible for subsidized medical care, housing and child care even after they are no longer eligible for cash aid.

As an indicator of need in the community, the seven core service agencies that serve low income clients served a total of 28,581 people in 10,109 households last year. These clients may or may not be on welfare, but they are not duplicated across core agencies, since each agency is responsible for a separate geographic area. A number of agencies besides the core service agencies serve low income clients as well. Social service agencies see a potential increase in demand for services as the cost of housing continues to exacerbate the difficulties of low income families.

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The average wage for those in San Mateo County who leave welfare due to earnings is currently \$9.65 per hour, well above the poverty level. (This is averaged across all family sizes. The federal poverty level varies by family size and is \$13,650 per year, or \$6.56 per hour, for a family of three.) However, HSA estimates that costs for a family of three, including child care, rent, food and transportation require earnings of \$18 to \$20 per hour. Even such an income, although livable, will leave the family well below the median county income of \$33 per hour or \$68,600 per year.

To help examine the upward mobility of those leaving the welfare rolls and how much financial support CalWORKs families will still need after they exit welfare, the SUCCESS program is being evaluated. In addition the SPHERE Institute which is responsible for the SUCCESS evaluation has also received federal funding for a more in-depth follow-up of CalWORKs clients in San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties, with San Mateo designated the lead county.

### **Affordable and Available Housing**

San Mateo County continues to be one of the least affordable housing and rental markets in the country. In the first half of 1997, the median-priced home in San Mateo County cost \$356,500 compared to \$299,030 in the San Francisco Bay Area, \$193,790 in the state, and \$125,600 in the nation. By November 1998 the median home price had risen to \$420,455 in San Mateo County.

The high cost of housing is consistently one of the top concerns in opinion surveys and interviews with residents. In the Community Assessment, less than 5% of respondents indicated that affordable housing was excellent/very good, while more than 80% rated this category as fair/poor. The responses were similar to those in Santa Clara County, but the ratings were much lower than in the rest of the state. The trends in median housing prices for single family homes and condominiums are shown in the chart below.

Although 58% of county residents owned their own homes according to the 1990 census, the Community Assessment found that homeowners averaged mortgages of about \$1,027 per month, well above the state average. It is increasingly difficult for a first time home buyer to afford to purchase a home. For the working poor and many clients of human services agencies, home ownership is basically out of the question. As can be seen from the chart below, in San Mateo County, a median-income family of four cannot afford to buy a median-priced single family home. Condominiums are somewhat more affordable.

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Apartment costs are rapidly accelerating and rentals are extremely difficult to find because of low vacancy rates. Between 1991 and 1997, the countywide average monthly rent for vacant apartments increased 32% for one-bedroom apartments (from \$800 to \$1,058) and 19% for two-bedroom apartments (from \$990 to \$1,177). Rental rates have risen especially sharply since 1995. The 1998 San Mateo County maximum affordable rent calculations for the Section 8 program indicate that the maximum affordable rent for a 2-bedroom apartment for a low income family is \$1,035. Apartments are increasingly unaffordable to low income families, and the low vacancy rate exacerbates the problem. The Community Assessment found that renters pay an average of \$953 per month for rent, much higher than the state average.

The **Community Assessment** found that 15% of respondents, and double that proportion of those with incomes under 185% of poverty, indicated that they shared housing with adults other than their spouse/partner in order to reduce housing costs. Several respondents commented on the health and safety risks of overcrowded housing.

New housing starts are on the rise, reaching a 10-year high of 11,600 units in Silicon Valley in 1997. However, in the January 1998 *San Mateo County Housing Needs Analysis Final Report*, it was found that between 1990 and 1995, job growth in San Mateo County generated the need for 1,000 new housing units each year. In contrast, between 1995 and 2010, an average of 3,100 new housing units will be needed in San Mateo County each year due to job growth. An analysis of housing supply trends results in a projected housing deficit between 1995 and 2010 of 15,600 to 24,600 housing units. The housing deficit is anticipated to be greatest for rental units, especially those with rents less than \$1,075 per month. The supply of this moderately priced rental housing is expected to fall at least 16,000 units short of demand between 1995 and 2010.

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The 1992 Strategic Plan focused on the working poor as well as families and individuals receiving public assistance. Both the working poor and even the middle class are being squeezed by spiraling housing costs. Those on welfare are at even a greater disadvantage in a tight housing market. There is an absolute lack of "affordable housing" developed by cities and the county for families whose income qualifies them as very low, low, or moderate. Using these definitions, since 1992, only a little more than 525 units of affordable housing have been built throughout the county, with over 50 still in the planning stage.

Cities and counties are not building as much affordable housing as expected, in part because there are financial incentives for each jurisdiction to build commercial space because of the increased tax revenue. In October 1998 a regional conference for the affordable housing community provided a forum for sharing innovative approaches to increasing the availability of affordable housing. A regional approach involving voluntary sharing of targeted sales tax revenues has been suggested in order to provide for a better balance between housing and other growth. The Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, comprised of 125 area businesses, is spearheading efforts to help alleviate the affordable housing crisis. In November Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A to make it easier to build affordable housing by waiving selected legal restrictions on its development. In addition, in September the David and Lucile Packard Foundation provided seed money to the Silicon Valley Housing Trust Fund to provide assistance to first time home buyers, renters, and homeless shelters and services.

*(Data sources: Sustainable San Mateo County, Healthy San Mateo County Assessment, Office of Housing of the Human Services Agency, and San Mateo County Housing Needs Analysis Final Report.)*

## **Homelessness**

There have been several surveys of homelessness in San Mateo County. The first comprehensive analysis took place in 1989. *Living in the Shadow of Affluence* estimated a homeless population of 8,665. This report included those living in overcrowded conditions or precariously housed with friends or relatives. The report served as an impetus for the county to tackle the issue of homelessness, resulting in the creation of the Center on Homelessness within the Human Services Agency.

Since then there have been two enumerations of the homeless in the county, in 1994 and 1996. For these counts, homelessness was defined based on the federal Stewart B. McKinney Act as an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence or has a primary night-time residence that is a shelter or similar temporary accommodation. It does not include people living in overcrowded conditions or precariously housed with friends or relatives, who were counted in the 1989 estimate.

In 1994, 16 agencies were surveyed. Using data with social security numbers or birth dates to avoid duplication in counting, these agencies served 2,432 homeless households. These households included 2,649 adults and 1,850 children for a total of 4,499 individuals who were homeless at some point in 1994. This represented a partial count, since many agencies did not track social security numbers and their data was not used. Using similar methodology, there were 4,663 homeless individuals in the county in 1996, accounting for .7% of the population. This included 3,351 households made up of 3,521 adults and 1,142 children.

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According to these figures, the number of homeless increased between 1994 and 1996, although the number of homeless children declined by 38% and the percentage of the county population that was homeless remained steady. However, the data is not completely comparable between these two studies. Although this partial information indicates that there were fewer homeless children in 1996 than in 1994, more information is needed from the upcoming 1998 enumeration.

It should be noted that it is very difficult to count the homeless population with accuracy. Although the 1994 and 1996 counts were lower than the 1989 estimate, this is in large part due to different methodologies and different definitions of homelessness.

The Community Assessment found that a slightly higher proportion, .9%, of respondents said they had been homeless at some point in the two prior years. This yields an estimate of almost 5,000 adults, considerably more than the 3,521 adults enumerated in 1996. Respondents with low incomes or less than a high school education were almost 3 times as likely to report an episode of homelessness in the Community Assessment.

The continuing decrease in housing affordability may well result in increased numbers of individuals who are homeless, living in overcrowded conditions, or precariously housed. The precise definition and the exact count is important, but even more important is the problem itself. It is increasingly difficult to find and keep safe, affordable housing in San Mateo County.

As seen in the following chart, between 1992 and 1998, 101 shelter beds were added in San Mateo County, increasing the number of shelter beds in the county by 29%. This year the first year-round emergency shelter opened after years of planning.

*(Data sources: San Mateo County 1994 Homeless Needs Assessment, San Mateo County 1996 Unduplicated Homeless Count, County of San Mateo Center on Homelessness)*

Respondents in the Community Assessment indicated that there are not enough shelter beds in the county. Only 10% gave excellent/very good ratings in the shelter bed category, while 71% offered fair/poor ratings. These are similar to responses in Santa Clara County and statewide.

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## **Child Well-being**

San Mateo County has the lowest foster care recidivism rate of the counties reported in the LAO report (8%) and ranks second in both the percent of children with two or fewer foster home placements in six years (approximately 65%) and the number of children placed in a permanent home within four years of entering foster care (89%). Overall, the LAO assigned San Mateo County the highest score on an index of overall child protection, taking into account the three measures of recidivism, stability and permanence.

As can be seen from the following chart, the child abuse rate in San Mateo has consistently been lower than the state overall.

The foster care rate has also remained well below the state average, as can be seen from the following chart:

*(Data source: State Department of Social Services)*

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According to the LAO report, San Mateo County ranked 5 among the large counties in terms of child support collections. In 1995, 58% of those with child support orders were receiving child support payments.

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## Child Care

The Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County (The Council) is completing a countywide child care needs assessment to assist the local Partnership Council in establishing child care priorities. What is already known is that child care is costly and that affordable child care is in great demand. The Community Assessment found relatively low evaluations of day care, similar to those found statewide. Only 38% of respondents said child care was excellent/very good, while 19% said fair/poor. Those who gave the lower ratings cited that there are not enough day care services, that they are low quality, or that they are expensive. There are shortages in infant care, subsidized care, and care for the working poor whose income makes them ineligible for subsidized care.

Low income families are eligible for subsidized child care but there are long waiting lists. The Council reported that as of 1994, in San Mateo County only 54% of those whose incomes made them eligible for subsidized child care were enrolled in subsidized care, in contrast with San Francisco where 81% were enrolled. Waiting lists for subsidized care have been growing in San Mateo County since 1993. The National Economic Development and Law Center estimates the current monthly cost of child care in San Mateo County to be \$943, just below the estimated housing cost of \$987. For a child under age 2, the average cost of child care in a licensed child care center is \$172 per week, 27% higher than the state average. The cost for a preschooler is \$112 per week in a licensed child care center, which is 19% above the state average. Child care is somewhat less costly in a licensed family child care home, \$135 per week for a baby under 2 and \$128 per week for a preschooler.

There are a variety of subsidized child care programs for low income parents who are working or going to school. Some publicly funded programs allow parents to choose child care. For instance, CalWORKS clients receive subsidized child care while working. There are also state funded preschools and federal Head Start programs for low income families. However, for all these subsidy programs the demand exceeds the supply and most programs have long waiting lists. Infant and special needs child care spaces are needed. There is also a need for more after-school care; 12% of all school age children, and 17% of 9 to 12-year olds, are self-supervised after school.

Respondents to the stakeholder interviews cited the need for more flexible hours and more employer-based care. One program begun since the inception of the 1992 plan is PalCare, a collaboration of labor, management, and public and non-profit agencies which offers child care 24 hours a day 365 days a year. The County of San Mateo has also opened a child care center for employees.

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## **Education**

San Mateo County continues to experience good educational outcomes. As can be seen from the chart below, San Mateo County students have consistently had a lower dropout rate than the rest of the state. Within the county these rates vary, with Sequoia Union High School District showing more than twice the dropout rate of the rest of the county.

San Mateo County ranks third in the state in the proportion of high school graduates who are college ready, meeting the requirements for entrance to the University of California and California State University systems.

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*(Data source: California Department of Education)*

Looking more closely at perceptions of the educational process based on the Community Assessment, 39% of parents of school-aged children believe that the local public schools do an excellent/very good job of preparing students for college or jobs. On the other hand, a full 33% believe the schools do a fair/poor job of this. Forty percent of parents rate school safety as excellent/very good, while another 26% rate it as fair/poor. Sixty-one percent of parents rate their own child's education as excellent/very good, with only 16% saying the education is fair/poor. However, a full quarter of low-income parents believe their child's education is only fair/poor. Parents who send their children to private schools tended to rate their own children's education more highly.

Twenty-one percent of students are Limited English Proficient (LEP), slightly less than the proportion in Santa Clara County and statewide. There are also geographic areas of the county which have greater numbers of disadvantaged students requiring a fuller array of support services. The FUTURES project represents successful collaboration between HSA and the schools in Daly City. Other successful school-based Healthy Start collaboratives have been initiated in the past few years in San Mateo, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, and Half Moon Bay.

## **Health**

County residents generally rate health care highly, with 54% rating health care as excellent/very good. Only 14% of county residents rate health care as fair/poor. This is similar to Santa Clara County, and much better than the rest of the state. More troubling is that a full 31% of those with income less than 185% of poverty, and 19% of those with less than a high school education rate health care as fair/poor.

There is generally a perception that health services are accessible, with 73% saying accessibility is excellent/very good and only 15% saying that accessibility is fair/poor. However, again the low income and those with less than high school education are more likely to indicate that accessibility is fair/poor. Access to health care can include insurance, cost, access to providers, location, and transportation. Low-income residents, including the uninsured, have the most problems with access. Also, both MediCal and the new Healthy Families program for children whose families are at less than 200% of poverty level are under-enrolled. The new countywide Health Care For All Coalition is focusing on outreach to low income uninsured children.

Mental health services are seen as less accessible than general services, with only 37% indicating that they are excellent/very good and almost as many (29%) rating them as fair/poor. This is especially true for Hispanics and the middle aged. There is a need for specialty care, such as for seniors who are at risk for depression. A major concern is that there is no inpatient psychiatric care for adolescents in the county.

MediCal covers very little dental care, which has also been cut down at the county hospital. More dental care is needed for low income children. Vision care is also rated as less accessible.

The Strategic Plan for Drug and Alcohol Services presented to the Board of Supervisors in September 1998 identified serious gaps in funding for substance abuse treatment and services. In response to this need, the Board of Supervisors provided extra funding this year to increase the number of treatment beds.

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Between 1996-97 and 1997-98, the greatest decrease in drug use among county funded programs was found in heroin and cocaine, while the number who used methamphetamines increased. The most recent data available indicate that there was an overall decrease of 7% of people in treatment during this time. Deaths due to drugs and alcohol rose from 1994 to 1995, then declined in 1996. Substance abuse hospitalizations rose steadily from 1993 to 1995. The accessibility of substance abuse treatment is not rated highly by the Community Assessment respondents, especially among the low to moderate income, Hispanic, middle aged, and less educated. This is consistent with findings from the LAO report that the county has only half of the average of 22 drug and alcohol treatment slots for a population of 10,000. The waiting time for substance abuse treatment in San Mateo County is the second longest of the 15 counties reported by the LAO. There are 300 to 500 people on the waiting list for treatment each month.

The Community Assessment made several findings in the area of pregnancy and infant health. The low infant mortality rate (1994-96) is a very positive finding, although it varies by race and ethnicity. The county is meeting the Healthy People 2000 goals for infant mortality except in the African American community, where infant mortality is more than 3 times that of whites.

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In San Mateo County only 5.7% of live births are low birth weight. This is slightly less than the percentage in the state overall, but does not meet the Healthy People 2000 goal of 5% low birth weight. Sixteen percent of pregnant women receive prenatal care late or not at all. This is better than the statewide rate of 21% but again does not meet the Healthy People 2000 goal of 10%.

Sixty-nine percent of children are immunized by age two. This number is greater than the 57% statewide but does not meet the target of 90% immunization coverage by 2000.

Teen births have been declining in San Mateo County, as in the rest of the state and nationwide. Experts are not sure how to explain this finding. It may be a combination of the availability of birth control and abortion, and a greater focus on abstinence. Teen births in San Mateo County are well below the state average, as can be seen below. Within the county, the teen birth rate is higher in South County and among Latinos.

The Prenatal-to-Three Initiative which began in 1996 offers MediCal families a range of services to maximize the healthy development of their infants and young children. This program has provided home-based assessments and other services to 3,300 clients.

### **Public Safety**

San Mateo County has a lower crime rate (both property and violent crime) than any of the 15 other large counties reported by the LAO. The crime rate dropped by 46% between 1986 and 1996, a greater reduction than any other county reported. As can be seen from the charts below, the rates of overall crime and of violent crime have been consistently dropping in San Mateo County since 1992 and remain lower than the crime rates statewide. For instance, there was an annual average of 414 violent crimes per 100,000 population in San Mateo County, compared to 931 statewide.

It should be noted that 64% of the top 10 jail bookings in the county in 1997 directly involved the use or abuse of alcohol or other drugs, up from 57% in 1996.

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Perceptions of crime vary greatly within the county. The Community Assessment found that 43% of low-income individuals rated their neighborhood safety and crime control as fair/poor, compared to only 14% of the overall respondents. The quality of law enforcement in the county was highly regarded by community panelists. Because of cooperative efforts between East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, and the county of San Mateo, the violent crime rate in East Palo Alto has fallen dramatically since 1992, and residents also report that they feel safer in their community.

Community Assessment respondents were concerned about increasing juvenile crime and the fact that juvenile crime is becoming more violent. Department of Justice reports indicate that in 1995 San Mateo County had a juvenile arrest rate of 79 per 1,000 children aged 10 to 17. This is lower than Santa Clara but somewhat higher than the 74 per 1,000 juvenile arrest rate statewide. However, it seems that youth violence has fallen in the past few years. The violent arrest rate in 1996 was 438 per 100,000 youth, almost as low as it was in 1989. The violent arrest rate has been decreasing and is lower than the state rate.

In terms of domestic violence, the San Mateo County espousal abuse arrest rate of 99 per 100,000 residents is much lower than the rate of 184 per 100,000 in Santa Clara County and 183 in the state. Although there were 3,000 domestic violence calls to the police in 1996, this was lower than in the previous two years. The Center for Domestic Violence Prevention Hotline reported 3,306 calls in 1994-95, 2,767 calls in 1995-96, 3,713 calls in 1996-97, and 2,959 calls in 1997-98. Community Assessment panelists felt that the county is doing a good job in recognizing and responding to the issue of domestic violence in a coordinated fashion involving police, the courts, and the District Attorney. Low income residents were more than twice as likely to report that they had been a victim of domestic violence in the previous five years.

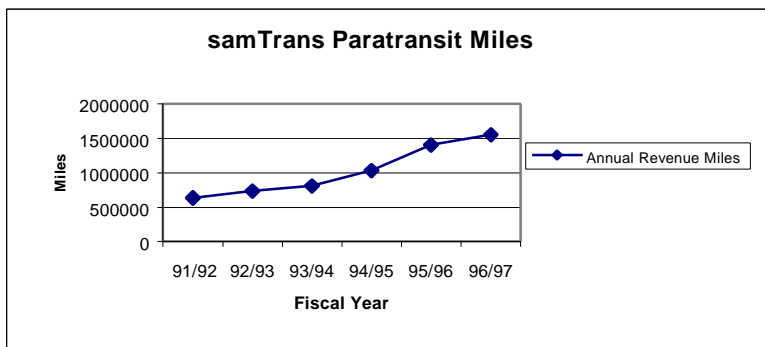
## **Transportation**

Traffic congestion is a big problem in Silicon Valley. The estimated vehicle miles traveled have doubled in the past 20 years. Dramatic increases have also been found in freeway congestion, which increased five-fold in just two years from 1994 to 1996, in large part due to highway construction at the time. The number of commuters driving alone increased from 69% in 1981 to 73% in 1994, while use of alternative modes of travel dropped from 31% to 27%.

The Community Assessment found relatively low ratings for public transportation. This category was rated excellent/very good by only 33% of respondents, and rated fair/poor by another 33%. On the other hand, the ratings in Santa Clara County and the state overall are even lower. Participants in the Community Assessment panel indicated the need for more bus routes and shuttles between communities, especially for seniors and youth.

Ridership on public transportation has increased in the past few years. Because of the costs of car ownership, low income individuals are over-represented on public transportation. SamTrans collaborates closely with HSA to ensure that service and route changes do not negatively impact the low income population. SamTrans and HSA have worked to ensure that transportation is appropriately addressed in welfare reform planning. HSA provides bus passes to welfare recipients for work activities. In addition, a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) study will be undertaken in 1999 to focus on how to best meet the needs of both welfare clients and the low income working population who need access to jobs and child care.

Since 1992, public transportation has experienced a major shift in emphasis in its ability to serve the disabled through the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The utilization of Paratransit Redi-Wheels, which provides small buses to serve those with special needs, has dramatically increased. Ridership has increased by 80% of the past six years, while annual miles have increased by 150%.



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Along with equipment and facility improvements, special attention has been paid to the cost of transportation. For example, in general fares have increased on fixed route buses, most recently from \$1.00 to \$1.10. However, fares have been kept stable for seniors and the disabled. In addition, Paratransit increased its regular fare from \$1.00 to \$1.50. However, under the newly instituted Lifeline Program, this fare increase does not take effect for low income clients.

A one-year pilot program, the Accessible Job Link Program, was begun in January 1998 by the Center for Independence of the Disabled to assist employees to identify accessible transportation options to job sites and to help link employees with appropriate transportation options.

Construction and upgrade of the rail infrastructure is a current focus of transportation in the county. Major changes are upcoming after the BART extension to the San Francisco airport is complete in 2002. SamTrans is currently undertaking an extensive bus study which will result in modifying bus systems to reduce underutilized routes and refocus on major arterials. This change will be phased in over several years beginning in 1999. Together, these improvements are intended to make public transportation a more viable commuting alternative.

*(Data Sources: SamTrans Short Range Transit Plan,  
FY 1997/98 to FY 2006/07, Sustainable San Mateo County)*

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