# **City of Cotati Food and Alcohol Environment Profile**

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## **Cotati Food Environment**

#### **Background**

Over the past few decades, attention to the built environment's impact on human health has progressed. Zoning, the means by which municipalities control physical development and property uses, began as an attempt to separate noxious land uses from residents. Zoning today often separates residential areas from development that provides access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity. The neighborhood grocer, a purveyor of healthy food, for example, was commonly located within walking distance of residential areas. Over time, zoning decisions have favored use of the automobile, resulting in the relocation of the grocer to shopping centers and the proliferation of automobile-friendly fast food restaurants. What often remains in neighborhoods are convenience stores and small markets which carry an abundance of high calorie, low nutrient foods and few healthy options, such as fresh produce. Residents often must to drive miles to reach the nearest large grocery store and those who can't drive (particularly low-income residents, those with disabilities, adolescents, and senior citizens) must either take a bus or taxi, both of which are time-consuming and costly. Emerging research is showing that this imbalance of healthy to less healthy food sources in communities has helped give rise to the current obesity epidemic in the United States.

In a 2008 study sponsored by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) researchers found that in California as a whole there are 4.18 times as many less healthy food outlets (fast-food restaurants and convenience stores) as there are healthy food outlets (grocery stores and produce vendors). In Sonoma County, the number is lower at 2.52, but a recent assessment conducted by the Community Activity and Nutrition Coalition (CAN-C) found that in some low-income Sonoma County communities there are five to nine times as many less healthy to healthy food sources. The researchers at CCPHA also discovered a link between the retail food environment and the prevalence of obesity and diabetes. The study concluded that people who live in neighborhoods with a profusion of less healthy food sources near home have a significantly higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes compared to those who did not. Another study conducted by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, Searching for Healthy Food: The Food Landscape in California Cities and Counties, analyzed retail food outlets for the state as a whole and for counties and cities statewide with populations greater than 250,000. The researchers found that in counties and cities throughout the state there are greater opportunities for individuals to purchase generally less healthy food available in fast-food restaurants and convenience stores than generally healthier food available at grocery stores and produce vendors.

Obesity is a serious health issue associated with an increased risk of morbidity and mortality from chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and approximately one third of preventable cancer deaths are related to nutrition, obesity and overweight. More than half of all California adults are now obese or overweight. The number of adults in Sonoma County (ages 18 years and older) who are obese doubled from 14% to 28% in 2001. In year 2000, the cost of medical care, workers' compensation and lost productivity attributed to overweight, obesity and physical inactivity among California adults was approximately \$21.7

billion dollars. The cost of overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity in Sonoma County in 2006 was estimated at \$436,724,958.

## **Methodology**

The availability of retail food outlets that sell high quality, nutritious foods at affordable prices is an important factor in encouraging individuals to select a healthy diet and subsequently reduce their risk of obesity and diabetes. Although healthy eating habits are ultimately a matter of personal choice, the foods available in communities influence those choices and related health outcomes. This assessment seeks to identify the ratio of less healthy to healthy food sources in Cotati in an effort to provide information that may be useful in developing policies that may positively influence future development, making the healthy choice the easy choice for residents of Cotati.

## Food Outlet Types

The following food outlets were identified and defined as "healthy" or "less healthy": grocery stores, small markets, convenience stores, and fast food restaurants. Classification of food outlets as "health" or "less healthy" was based on research outcomes in *Designed by Disease* and the *Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (CX<sup>3</sup>)* initiative.

The labeling of a food outlet as "healthy" or "less healthy," used in this document, was based on  $CX^3$ research and outlet classifications described below.  $CX^3$  examines food outlets to measure whether or not it provides customers with access, availability, quality, and promotes nutritious foods, especially fresh produce. Sit down restaurants, snack/dessert, and coffee shops are typically not included in research involving the food environment due to the amount of variability in such establishments. It is important to note that having a systematic approach based on the reasonable assumption that certain food sources offer healthy or less healthy food does not necessarily conclude an accurate picture of a community's food environment. It is helpful for communities to engage in defining the quality of their food environment by conducting a field site survey of each outlet.

- **Grocery Store (**"healthy") A large store that sells food and other items, including canned and frozen foods, fresh fruits and vegetable, and fresh (raw) and prepared meats, fish, and poultry. It may be part of a small regional chain of fewer than five stores or may be independent. This type of store also has 20 or more employees and at least four cash registers.
- Small Market ("less healthy") Usually an independent store that may sell food including canned and frozen foods, fresh vegetables, and fresh (raw) and prepared meats, fish, and poultry as well as convenience items and alcohol. This type of store has fewer than 20 employees and three or fewer cash registers. (Note: While a small market may be considered "healthy," *CX*<sup>3</sup> found that most small markets surveyed in *CX*<sup>3</sup>studies qualified as "less healthy."

- **Convenience** ("less healthy") A store that sells convenience items only, including bread, milk, soda, snacks and may sale alcohol and gasoline. These stores do not sell fresh (raw) meat. These stores also are known as food marts.
- **Fast-Food Restaurant** ("less healthy") Fast-food restaurants are defined as restaurants offering (1) quick service based on criteria of the National Restaurant Association, (2) meal service (vs. snacks, desert and coffee), and (3) prices less than \$7.00 per meal. A fast food restaurant does not offer hosted seating and customers pay for food prior to consumption. Restaurants with more than five locations with the same name, major fast-food chains, and regional and locally –owned chains are included.

## Half-Mile Buffer

The half-mile buffer has been used by health and policy experts as a built environment indicator because many individuals are likely to walk this distance for convenience, although this varies by community and individual. For the purposes of this assessment, five half-mile buffer maps were developed to help city planners identify correlations between the resident population and the food environment.

A list of all food outlets found within the City of Cotati's geographic boundaries was used to categorize food outlets by type (fast-food restaurant, convenience store, small market, grocery store, and produce vendor/ farmers' markets). Each food outlet was mapped, and included a half-mile buffer and population estimate within the buffer zone.

## • Population within <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> mile of food sources

Research shows that people who live in communities with an abundance of less healthy food sources have a higher incidence of overweight, obesity, and associated health consequences, such as diabetes.

## • Population within <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> mile of public parks

Research shows that residents who live within walking distance of a public park are more likely to use the facilities, which could include community gardens. Studies also show that community gardens help increase the availability and appreciation for fresh fruits and vegetables, in addition to providing an opportunity for exercise, green space, and a place for community gathering. Moreover, gardening has been shown to increase social engagement, bringing people together, building community and improving neighborhoods.

## • Food outlets within 1/2 mile of public schools

Research shows that convenience stores and fast food restaurants located near school (K-12) are significant sources of energy-dense, low-nutritive foods and beverages for children and adolescents. Students are visiting food outlets on a regular basis before and after school to purchase snack food and/or drinks containing hundreds of discretionary calories that researchers believe may be contributing to obesity and overweight.

## • Food Outlets within 1/2 mile of public parks

Although no research was found to drawing a correlation between the proximity of food outlets to parks and adult or childhood obesity, it can be assumed that a relationship may exist given the integrated nature of parks in communities and the frequency by which children and families visit parks. For example, if an abundance of less healthy food sources are located near a park, then it can be assumed that the children may be purchasing snack food and/or drinks in much the same way they do before and after school.

## Food Outlets within ½ mile of Senior Housing

The over-60 population in Sonoma County will see some of the most dramatic increases in numbers during the next decade. According to the Center's for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "older adults interact with the built environment in ways that reflect changing lifestyles and changing physical capabilities." As a result, older adults are preferring to "age in place," referring to the desire of older adults to stay in their own homes and communities. This demographic shift will require municipalities to provide reliable public transportation, housing that is convenient to community destinations (such as restaurants and grocery stores), recreational options, and access to healthy affordable foods for the aging population.

#### Food Source Ratios

• Ratio of less healthy to healthy food sources: The ratio of less healthy to healthy foods will be measured using the "Retail Food Environment Index" (RFEI) as developed by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy. The RFEI is measured by the total of less healthy food sources (convenience stores, small markets and fast-food restaurants) divided by the total of healthy food sources (grocery stores and produce vendors).

RFEI= <u>Less healthy Food Outlets</u> Healthy Food Outlets

The ratio of less healthy food sources to healthy food sources will show the variance between the two within Cotati's municipal boundaries. This is important because the more the people of Cotati are presented with less healthy food outlets within their community, the more likely they are to make less healthy food choices. Alternatively, the more healthy food sources there are in Cotati, the more likely residents are to make healthier food choices.

• Ratio of less healthy and healthy food sources to the population: The ratio of less healthy and healthy food sources to the population of Cotati will be measured by dividing the population of Cotati by the total sum of all healthy, and less healthy, food outlets found within the city's municipal boundaries.

Population of Cotati Healthy Food Outlets <u>Population of Cotati</u> Less healthy Food Outlets The ratio of food outlets (less healthy and healthy) to population of Cotati will show the disparity in access to healthy food. This again is important because the food outlet type most readily available to Cotati residents influences dietary behavior.

## **Findings**

• <u>Retail Food Environment Index</u>: For every 1 healthy food source in Cotati there are 9 less healthy food sources. (REFI = 9.0)

Total Fast Food: 9 Total Convenience: 9 Total Grocery: 1 Total Produce Vendor: 1 (not a year round farmers' market) Total Small Market: 3 (excluded from REFI, see section regarding small markets below) **Total Food Outlets: 20** Total Less Healthy Food Outlets: 18 Total Healthy Food Outlets: 2 **REFI: 18/2= 9.0** 

Note: Three stores were categorized as specialty stores and excluded from the food outlet total and the RFEI calculation. It's important to note that if the City of Cotati discovers through field site surveying that the small markets are "healthy," the RFEI of Cotati would be: Less healthy (18)/healthy (5) = 3.6

• <u>Ratio of Less healthy Food Outlets per Person</u>: There is approximately 1 less healthy food source for every 418.6 persons living in the City of Cotati.

City of Cotati Population: 7,535 (DOF 2010) Total Less Healthy Food Outlets: 18 Total Population (7,535)/ Total Less healthy Food Outlets (18) = 418.6

• <u>Ratio of Healthy Food Outlets per Person</u>: There is approximately 1 healthy food source for every 3,768 persons living in Cotati.

City of Cotati Population: 7,535 Total Healthy Food Outlets: 2 Total Population (7,535)/Total Healthy Food Outlets (2) = 3,768

- <u>Food Outlets within ½ mile of public schools:</u> Thomas Page Elementary, found to the west of Highway 101, South of Highway 116, is located in an area with 1 less healthy food sources and no (0) healthy food sources within a half-mile of the school.
- <u>Population within <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> mile of public park</u>: The ratio of less healthy to healthy food sources around all parks, except Thomas Page, ranges from 5.0 to 12.0, meaning that for every healthy food outlet within a half-mile of most parks in Cotati, there are 5 to 12 unhealthy food sources.

Public Park	<u># Healthy Food</u>	<u># Less Healthy</u>	Population within
	<u>Outlet</u>	Food Outlets	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
Sunflower	1	7	587
Helen Putnam	1	9	3617
Veterans	1	9	4689
Delano	1	9	4058
Civic Center	1	5	2789
LaPlaza	2	12	3872
Thomas Page	0	0	372
Draper Park	0	6	1221
Falletti Park	1	8	2336

• <u>Food Outlets within ½ mile senior housing</u>: Both senior complexes are found within a few blocks of each other. Therefore, the ½ mile buffer around senior housing has a RFEI of 6.0, meaning for every healthy food sources, there are 6 less healthy food sources

## **Discussion**

Various strategies and/or policy options have been implemented throughout the country in an attempt by counties and municipalities to improve food environments for residents. These strategies range from implementing zoning ordinances to improve healthy food options in underserved communities to providing incentives for healthy retail store development to awarding conditional use permits for the placement of community gardens. Land use planners are also using similar assessments to identify and propose new park sites, create more walkable routes free of physical barriers, and develop smart growth policies.

The information presented in this report may be useful in informing the development of policies that improve the availability of and access to healthy foods based on public health rational. In order to create an environment where making the healthy choice is the easy choice for its residents, the following policy approaches are presented for consideration (please note that these strategies are not customized for the City of Cotati, i.e., an analysis of Cotati's General Plan and Zoning Codes was not conducted for this Profile):

- Institute a moratorium on fast-food restaurants and convenience stores until a ratio of healthy to less healthy food sources can be determined and zoning ordinances developed
- Adopt policies that aim to create a more balanced RFEI for the city as a whole and for each neighborhood
- Conduct in-store assessments of food outlets (especially small markets) to determine the access, availability, quality, and promotion of nutritious foods, especially fresh produce, in order to establish and accurate RFEI
- Create incentives for small markets to increase the amount of healthy food options they carry, including produce
- Increase the number of healthy food outlets west of Highway 101
- Increase the number of healthy food outlets near senior housing, schools, and parks

## **Cotati Alcohol Environment**

## **Background**

Many alcohol-related problems stem from excessive alcohol consumption, including binge drinking (5 or more drinks on one or more occasions for men and 4 or more drinks for women) and heavy daily consumption. Over-consumption of alcohol is responsible for approximately 79,000 deaths per year in the U.S., making it the third leading cause of preventable death in the nation. Increases in alcohol density within a community have been shown to increase alcohol consumption, along with an increase in the rate of violence within a community. When the density of on-or off-sale alcohol outlets in a community is high or increases, the level of alcohol consumption is correspondingly high or increases, and excessive consumption and its diverse related harms occur.<sup>6</sup>

## **Methodology**

The effect of alcohol density within a community presents itself with the most substantiating evidence. Studies have found that greater alcohol outlet density is associated with an increase in consumption and related harms, including medical harms, injury, crime, and violence.

The following areas were examined to establish and communicate alcohol accessibility in the city:

• Alcohol density was measured by density per area and per person. A map displaying all alcohol outlets within the City of Cotati was analyzed to identify alcohol outlets and their location. Alcohol density per person was determined by dividing the total population by the total number of alcohol outlets. The ratio was conducted for on-sale, off-sale, and on and off sale combined for a total of alcohol outlets within Cotati.

Additional Options for measurement not conducted in this report:

- The number of on/off sale alcohol outlets within ½ mile of schools. This metric is important because high rates of alcohol use by youth may be associated with high rates of alcohol outlets within close proximity to schools.
- The total population within ½ mile of both on and off sale alcohol outlet. This is important because ease of access to alcohol outlets may make it easier for adults to access alcohol. Ease of access for adults may also make it easier for youth in accessing alcohol from an adult.
- The number of on/off sale alcohol outlets within ½ mile of a park. This is important because parks are potential sites for underage drinking, and subsequent violence.
- The number of alcohol related collisions reported for Cotati, measured using the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) data, (including incidents where Cotati retail alcohol outlet was place of last drink, if available). This data is important because there is some evidence supporting the claim that higher density of alcohol outlets

increases motor vehicle collisions. Studies assessing the relationship between alcohol outlet density and motor-vehicle crashes produced mixed results.

## **Findings**

- Per population alcohol density:
  - City of Cotati Population: 7,535
  - Total On-Sale Alcohol Outlets: 27
  - o Total Off-Sale Alcohol Outlets: 12
  - Total All Alcohol Outlets: 39

Total population (7,535)/ Total On-Sale (27) = 279; There is 1 on sale alcohol outlet for every 279 persons in Cotati.

Total population (7,535)/Total Off-Sale (12) = 628; There is 1 off sale alcohol outlet for every 628 persons in Cotati.

Total population (7,535)/Total All Alcohol Outlets (39) = 193. There is 1 alcohol outlet (on and off sale combined) for every 193 persons in Cotati.

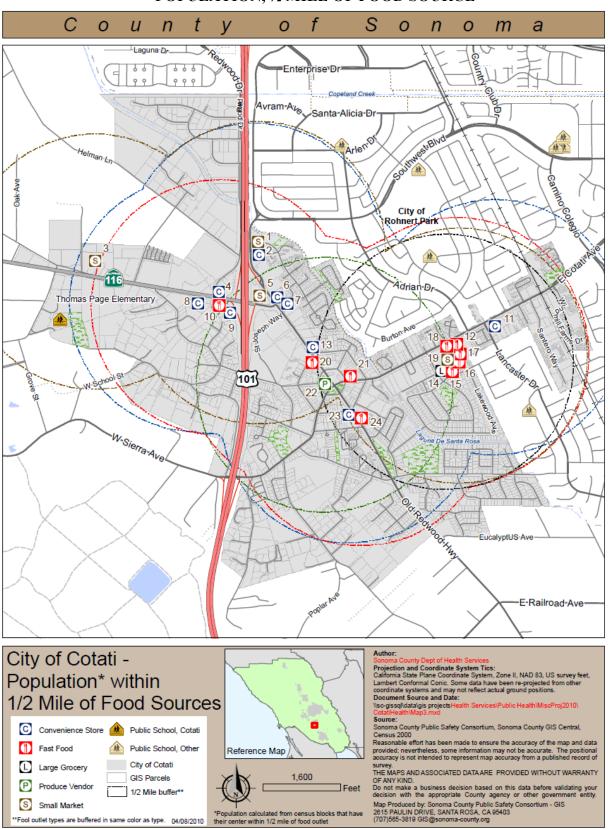
- The highest concentrations of On/Off sale alcohol outlets in Cotati occur within 3 zones; the downtown core, highway 101/116 interchange, and the Oliver's Shopping Center.
- Alcohol Density Per Sq. Mile
  - City of Cotati Land Area: 2 sq. miles
  - Total "On-Sale" Outlets: 27
  - Total "Off-Sale" Outlets: 12

Total "On-sale" Alcohol Outlets per Sq. Mile= 13.5 outlets per sq. mile Total "Off-sale" Alcohol Outlets per Sq. Mile= 6 outlets per sq. mile Total Alcohol Outlets (on and off sale combined) per Sq. Mile = 19.5 per sq. mile

## **Discussion**

Depending upon the results of a review of current Cotati General Plan policies and zoning codes, various strategies and/or policy options will be identified that could help Cotati reduce health related harms associated with alcohol density and location. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Adopt policies and/or zoning regulations separating alcohol outlets from residences, schools, parks, and playgrounds.
- Adopt policies and/or zoning regulations limiting the density of alcohol outlets.



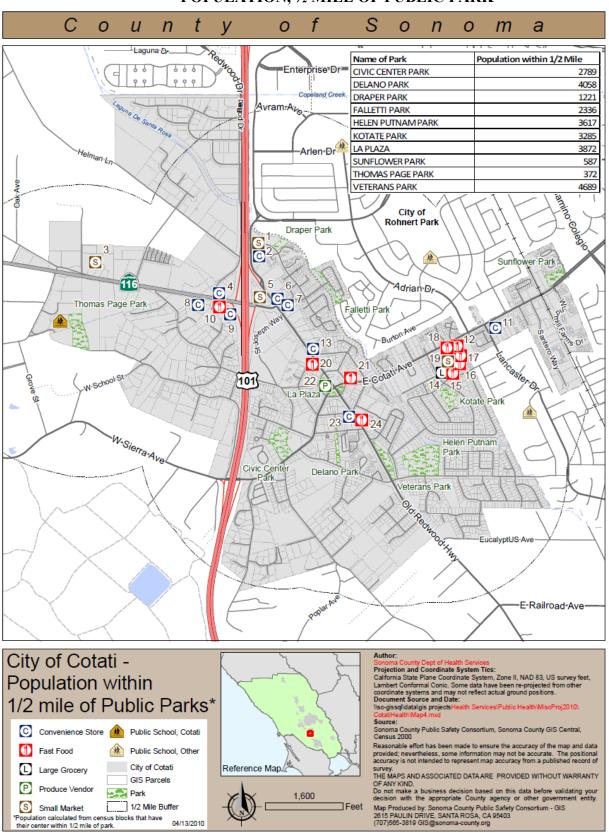
#### **POPULATION, ½ MILE OF FOOD SOURCE**

		Population within ½		"Less
Key	Business Name	Mile	"Healthy"	Healthy"
1	Apna Bazaar*	1193	N/A	N/A
2	Fast & Easy Mart	1193		х
3	Oroweat/Entenmanns**	317	N/A	N/A
4	Silladda Valero	1656		Х
5	Asiana Market*	1642	N/A	N/A
6	Redwood Oil Service Station	1663		х
7	Walgreen #03084	1686		х
8	D & Ds Liquor & Deli	1188		Х
9	Circle K/76 #2705426	1701		х
10	Burger King	1701		х
11	Cotati Food & Gas Mart – Chevron	1824		Х
12	Subway	2414		Х
13	USA Station #68122	3115		х
14	Olivers Market	2518	Х	
15	Porter Street BBQ	2961		Х
16	Cape Cod Fish N Chips	2215		Х
17	Fregenes	2422		Х
18	Taqueria El Brinquito	2388		х
19	Iniquez #2*	2388	N/A	N/A
20	Papa Murphys Pizza	3236		Х
21	Lombardis	3668		Х
22	Cotati Farmers Market @La Plaza Prk	3439	Х	
23	Cotati Market	4252		Х
24	Giovanni's Pizza	4145		Х

## FOOD OUTLETS

## • Specialty stores- excluded from RFEI formula

\*\*Specialty store- mapped, but not counted as a market and excluded in RFEI formula



#### **POPULATION, 1/2 MILE OF PUBLIC PARK**

19

20

21 22

23

24

Name of Park	Population within 1/2 Mile
CIVIC CENTER PARK	2789
DELANO PARK	4058
DRAPER PARK	1221
FALLETTI PARK	2336
HELEN PUTNAM PARK	3617
KOTATE PARK	3285
LA PLAZA	3872
SUNFLOWER PARK	587
THOMAS PAGE PARK	372
VETERANS PARK	4689
Кеу	Business Name
1	Apna Bazaar
2	Fast & Easy Mart
3	Orowheat/Entenmanns
4	Silladda Valero
5	Asiana Market
6	Redwood Oil Service Station
7	Walgreen #03084
8	D & Ds Liquor & Deli
9	Circle K/76 #2705426
10	Burger King
11	Cotati Food & Gas Mart - Chevron
12	Subway
13	USA Station #68122
14	Olivers Market
15	Porter Street BBQ
16	Cape Cod Fish N Chips
17	Fregenes
18	Taqueria El Brinquito

# DUDI IC DADIC

Iniquez #2

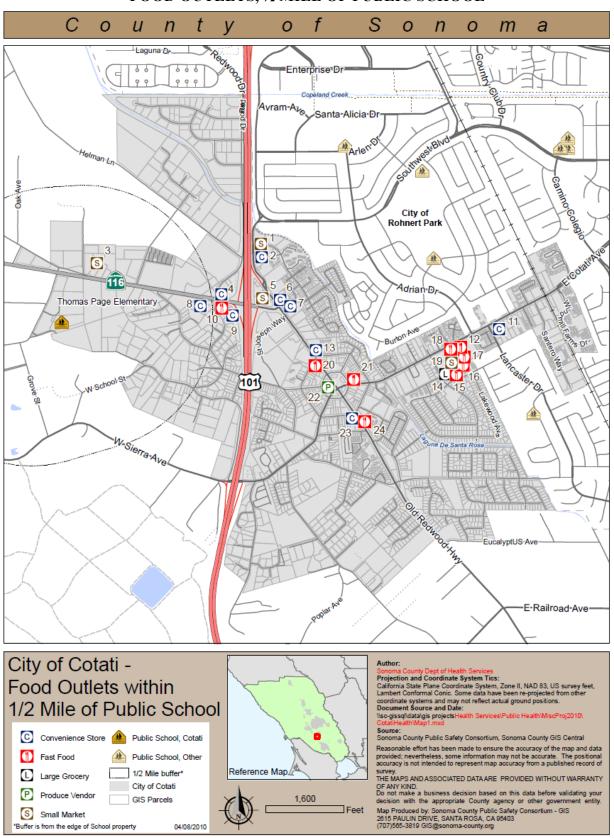
Lombardis

Cotati Market

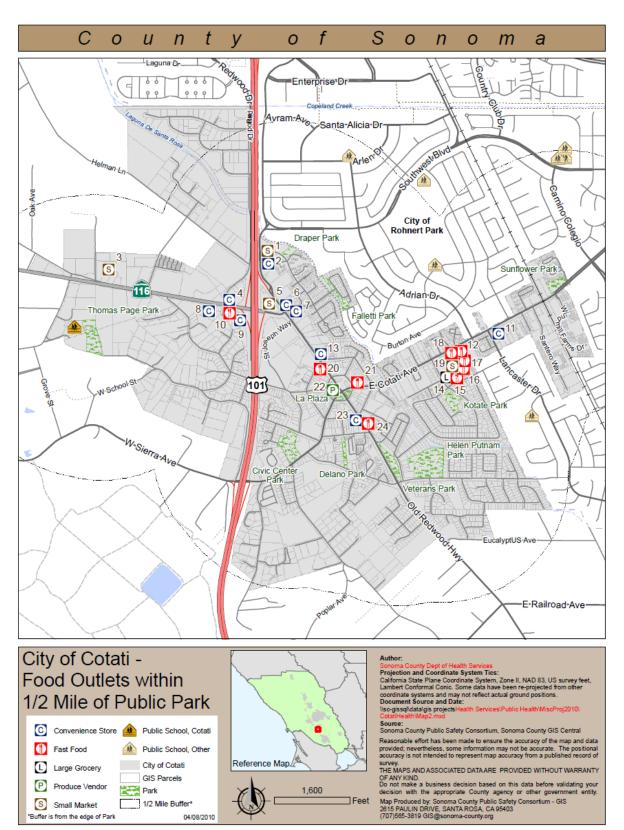
Giovanni's Pizza

Papa Murphys Pizza

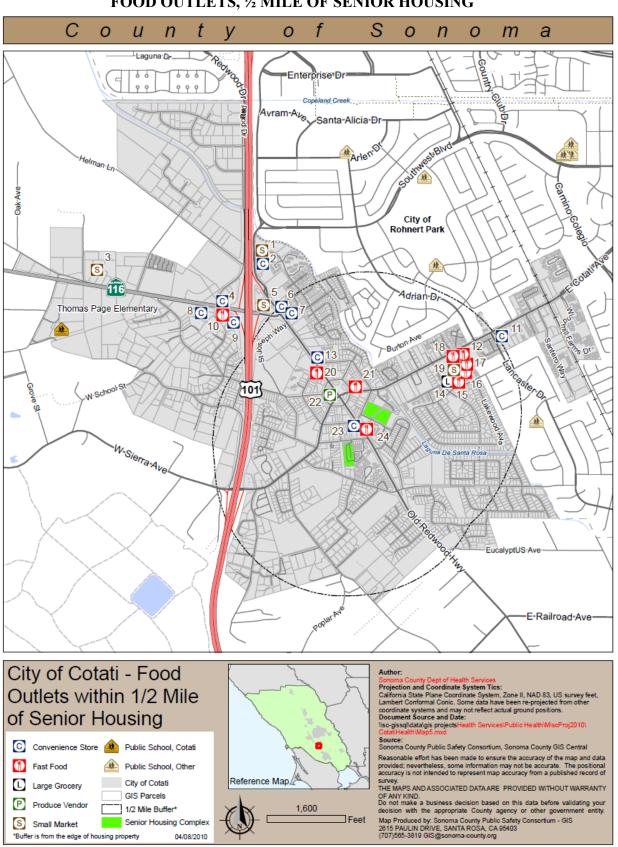
Cotati Farmers Market @La Plaza Prk

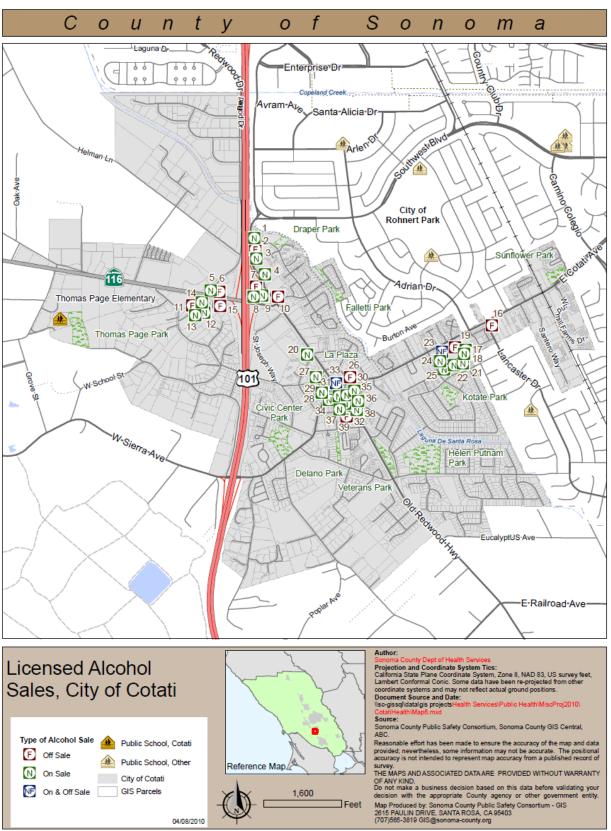


#### FOOD OUTLETS, ½ MILE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL



FOOD OUTLETS, <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> MILE OF PUBLIC PARK





#### LICENSED ALCOHOL OUTLETS

	ALCOHOL OUTLETS		
		SALES	
KEY	BUSINESS	TYPE	LICENSE TYPE
I	LAS GUITARRAS DE COTATI	On-sale	47- restaurant: beer, wine, distilled spirits
2	FAST &EASY	Off-sale	21-store: beer, wine, distilled spirits
3	KARMA ZAMBLA ENTERPRIZE	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
4	MI PUEBLITO	On-sale	47- restaurant: beer, wine, distilled spirits
5	STARS	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
6	SILLADDA VALERO	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
7	ASIANA MARKET	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
8	MIKES AT THE CROSSROADS	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
9	BEAR KOREAN RESTAURANT	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
10	COTATI CHEVRON	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
11	D & D LIQOUR & DELI	Off-sale	21-store: beer, wine, distilled spirits
12	BUFFALO BILLIARDS POOL HALL	On-sale	40-bar: beer only
13	LYNNS THAI RESTAURANT	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
14	MAI VIETNAMESE CUISINE	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
15	CIRCLE K 76	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
16	COTATI CHEVRON	Off-sale	21-store: beer, wine, distilled spirits
17	TAQUERIA EL BRINQUITO	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
18	FU ZHOU CHINESE RESTAURANT	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
19	INIQUEZ 2	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
20	CHINA CHEF	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
21	TUBBYS RESTAURANT	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
22	NORTH LIGHT BOOKS & CAFÉ	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
23	OLIVERS MARKET	Off-sale	21-store: beer, wine, distilled spirits
24	OLIVERS MARKET	On-sale	42-bar/tavern: beer and wine
25	THAI KITCHEN	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
26	LOMBARDI'S DELI	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
27	COTATI YACHT CLUB	On-sale	47- restaurant: beer, wine, distilled spirits
28	DOS AMIGOS RASTAURANT	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
29	NICOLINOS	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
30	TRADEWINDS	On-sale	48-bar/nightclub:beer, wine, dist. spirits
31	SPANKYS BAR & CABARET	On-sale	48-bar/nightclub:beer, wine, dist. spirits
32	FRIAR TUCKS PUB & SPIRIT	On-sale	47- restaurant: beer, wine, distilled spirits
33	COTATI CORNER	Off-sale	20-store: beer and wine
34	COTATI CORNER	On-sale	42-bar/tavern: beer and wine
35	CAFE SALSA	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
36	REDWOOD CAFÉ	On-sale	41-restaurant: beer and wine
	NAGOMI JAPANESE		41-restaurant: beer and wine
37	RESTAURANT	On-sale	
38	8 BALL TAVERN	On-sale	48-bar/nightclub:beer, wine, dist. spirits
39	COTATI MARKET	Off-sale	21-store: beer, wine, distilled spirits

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