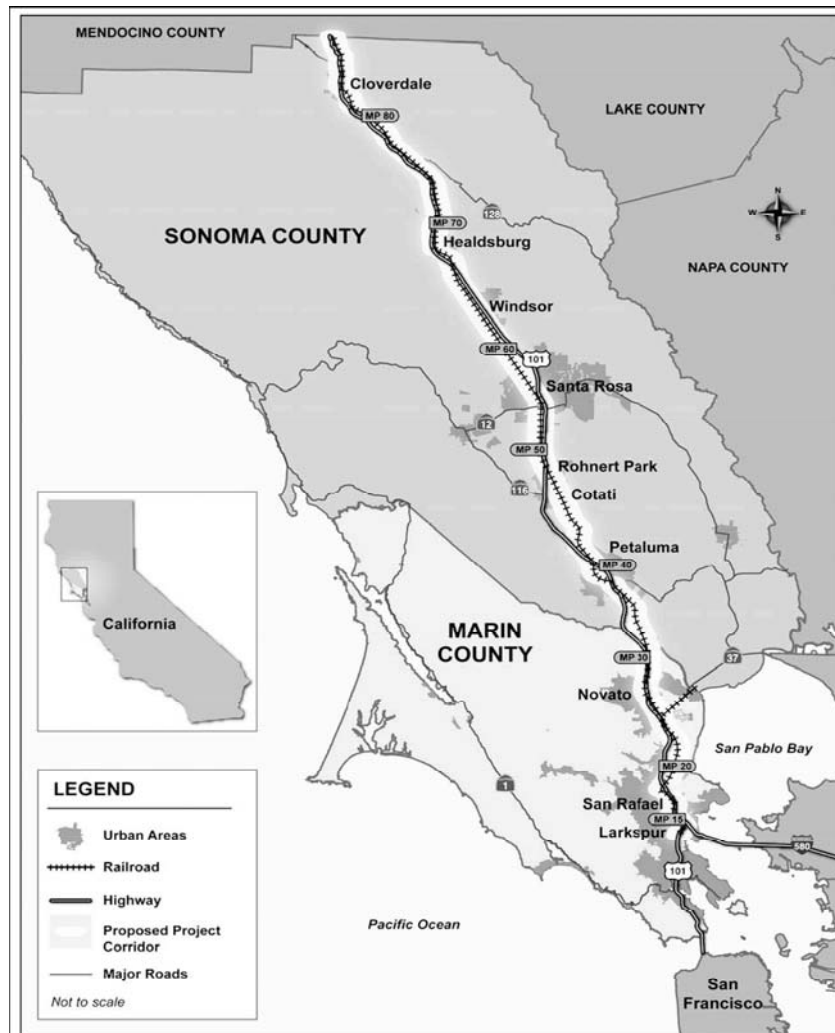


SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT INFORMATION

Prepared by
League of Women Voters of Marin County

Overview of SMART Project

The proposed SMART project would provide passenger rail service along approximately 70 miles of the existing single track Northwestern Pacific (NWP) rail corridor from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to Larkspur in Marin County, with 14 stations, several passing sidings, a rail maintenance facility and nine shuttle routes serving stations in Marin and Southern Sonoma counties. The proposed project includes the implementation of a bicycle/pedestrian pathway generally within or adjacent to the rail corridor. The train and bicycle/pedestrian pathway will make use of an existing publicly owned right of way that has been preserved for this purpose. Major funding for the proposed project would come from the proceeds of a 20-year 1/4-cent sales tax measure, if approved by two-thirds of the voters of the District (Marin plus Sonoma Counties) in a district-wide election. The goal is to have the train up and running by 2014.



Implementing Legislation

AB2224 (Nation) passed in 2002 and created the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District and established a 12-member board of directors to govern the district, including two supervisors and three council members from each county and two members of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District. The board has placed a tax measure on the ballot, and if passed, the board can proceed with the project and issue revenue bonds.

Proposed Train Schedule

Train service is geared toward people commuting to work in the morning and returning in the evening. Start-up plans call for 14 trains per weekday at 30-minute intervals during the peak commute hours with one mid-day train. Weekend service is planned at four round trips through the corridor spaced during the day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Stations and Connections

The proposed passenger rail service would serve 14 stations from Cloverdale in the north to Larkspur in the south. Nine of the stations are in Sonoma County and five are in Marin County. The Marin stations are Novato North on Redwood Boulevard within walking distance of Firemen's Fund and Novato South. Four possible sites have been environmentally cleared for a Novato South station: the historic Downtown station, Hamilton Field, the Ignacio "Wye" at the intersections of Highways 101 and 37 and the site at Roblar and Nave drives. The San Rafael stations are north of the Marin Civic Center under the 101 overpass and in downtown San Rafael just north of the bus transit center. The Larkspur station is planned on SMART property adjacent to the Marin Airporter. Parking would be available at all stations except Santa Rosa Railroad Square, Downtown San Rafael and Larkspur Landing. There will be passenger drop-off areas at the stations. Convenient connections to local and regional buses have been taken into consideration. Nine shuttle buses are included to take riders to employment centers, mainly in Marin County. The ferry will take people to San Francisco. Bicycle parking will be provided at all stations.

Rail Cars

The SMART project expects to use self-propelled Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) vehicles. DMU's have the capacity to operate using bio-diesel fuels. Depending on the configuration, each vehicle has 90-100 seats and opportunities for wheel chairs and bicycles. One operator can control one, two or three DMU units. The DMU has lower noise levels and less air pollution than locomotive hauled equipment. To minimize the noise from train horns, local jurisdictions may go through a process to establish Quiet Zones by adding additional crossing controls and other safety features. SMART has committed \$4.5 million in its funding plan to add infrastructure for Quiet Zones.

Bicycle-Pedestrian Pathway

A key component of the proposal is the creation of a bicycle-pedestrian pathway that extends the entire length of the SMART corridor. The construction of the pathway is proposed both on and off SMART right-of-way depending on physical and environmental constraints and available rights-of-way. The connection between San Rafael and Larkspur includes restoring the Cal Park Hill tunnel for bicycle, pedestrian and passenger rail. SMART proposes to fund approximately 100% of the pathway construction and all of the maintenance costs on the SMART right of way.

Track and Bridges

The existing single track NWP corridor will be upgraded with passing track and sidings, which will accommodate train schedule requirements. All of the rail, with the exception of rail recently or currently being upgraded, will be re-laid with welded track, new ballast, ties, signage and drainage facilities. All timber trestle bridges will be replaced with concrete trestle spans supported on concrete pilings. Other bridges will be upgraded or replaced.

Future Development

Decisions on future development will depend on local and county general plans. The Marin countywide plan designates that new development should take place in the urban corridor. In the long run, residential and commercial development could increasingly cluster near transit stations, particularly in Sonoma County.

Freight Service

The North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) has the legal right to operate freight service north of the Ignacio Wye in Novato. NCRA estimates that freight service will involve three round-trip trains a day. SMART passenger rail service has priority over freight service thus freight trains can be scheduled to avoid conflicts. No freight service will be allowed south of Highway 37 in Novato. SMART's 2008 Supplemental EIR concludes that freight and passenger trains can use the corridor together without forcing freight trains to run at night.

Ridership Estimates

The model used to forecast ridership has a number of strengths, including the fact that it includes the entire Bay Area and all public transit lines. It also has limitations because it covers such a large area. The analysis indicated that there would be about 5,300 weekday riders at the start-up of service. It also projected that ridership would increase to 6,000 daily weekday riders if gas prices hit \$5 per gallon, with each additional dollar in gas gallon prices pushing ridership higher by 15 to 20 percent.

Costs and Revenues
(From the Smart Implementation Plan)

The proposed quarter-cent sales tax would generate about \$890.7 million over 20 years. SMART has about \$130 million in local, state and federal funding that would become available if voters pass the sales tax. A local tax also opens new opportunities to compete for state and federal grants that require a local match. In order to have the system up and running as soon as possible, SMART plans to utilize bond financing. These bonds will be paid back over the 20 years of the plan. Fare recovery is estimated at about 36% of the rail service operating costs.

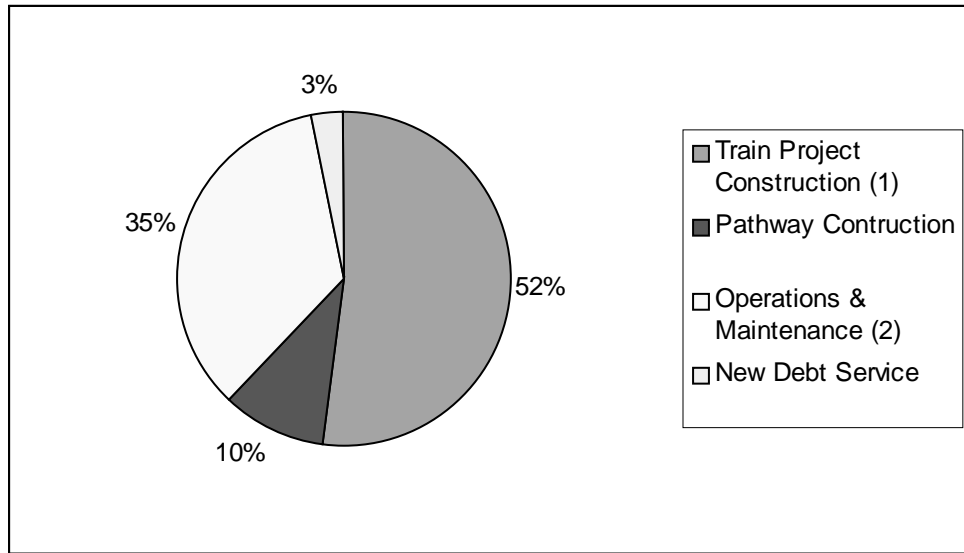
These numbers were reviewed and confirmed by a blue ribbon panel of passenger rail Marin Board of Directors in 2008. They also have been reviewed by Dr. Robert Eyler, chairman of the Economics Department at Sonoma State University, who called SMART's funding plan "reasonable and conservative". Costs have increased since 2006 estimates due to major increases in material and fuel, as well as changes added or revised because of the environmental review process. The system could be up and running by 2014.

Table 1: SMART Project Costs (All costs in 2008 dollars)

<i>Project Capital Costs</i>	
Train Project	\$450 million
Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathway	\$ 91 million
Total	\$541 million
<i>Annual Operating Costs</i>	
Train Project	\$17.1 million
Bicycle/Pedestrian Pathway	\$0.8 million
Shuttle Services	\$1.4 million
Total	\$19.3 million

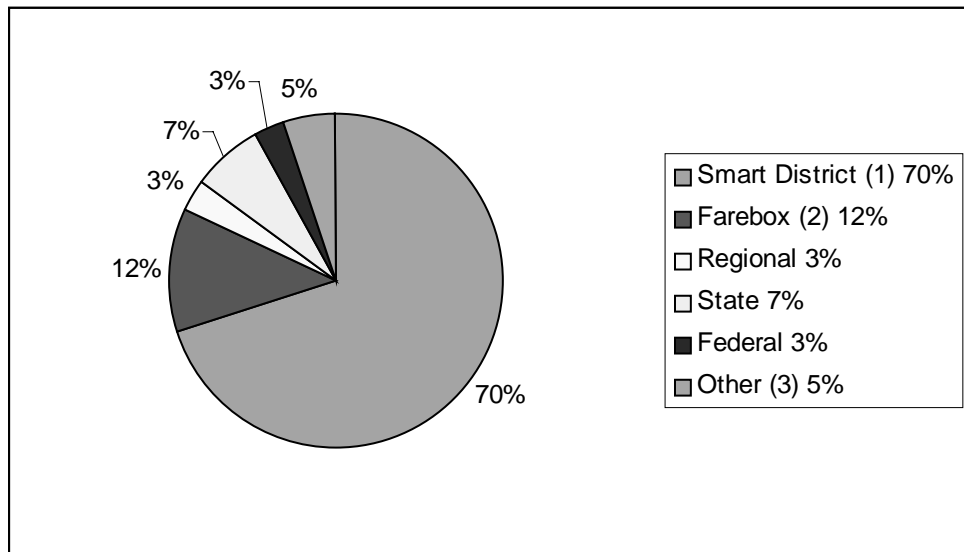
Figures 2 and 3 identify the anticipated percentage share of costs and revenues, respectively, for implementing the SMART program over a 20 year period. For more financial information see the full text of SMART's 2008 Project Funding Plan at www.sonomamarintrain.org

Figure 2: Anticipated Percentage Share of Costs (Estimates in 2008 dollars)



NOTES: (1) Includes Final Design (\$56 million) plus train project construction (\$394 million).
 (2) Includes annual operating and maintenance costs and planning funds.

Figure 3: Anticipated Percentage Share of Revenues (Estimates in 2008 dollars)



NOTES: (1) Includes SMART sales tax revenues, SMART property lease revenues and joint development revenues and other funds.
 (2) Fares are expected to contribute approximately 12% of total revenues over 20 years and 36% of annual rail operating costs.
 (3) Includes Sonoma County Measure M revenues and NCRA improvement off-sets.

Implementing Guidelines

The following is a list of implementation guidelines from the Expenditure Plan:

1. A Citizens Oversight Committee will be established by the SMART Board to provide input and review on the Strategic Plan and subsequent updates.
2. SMART shall undergo an annual independent financial audit.
3. SMART will prepare a Strategic Plan prior to July 2009 that will identify planned investments in capital implementation, operations and maintenance for the duration of the tax.
4. SMART is authorized to issue revenue bonds, pursuant to Public Utilities Code section 105220, to advance the commencement of, or expedite the delivery of, passenger train service, the bicycle/pedestrian pathway and related train transit improvements.
5. The measure will be administered by the State Board of Equalization.
6. The duration of the measure will be 20 years, beginning on April 1, 2009 and expiring on March 31, 2029.
7. Actual revenues may be higher or lower than expected due to changes in availability of state or federal funds, changes in cost and/or fluctuations in sales tax revenues. Estimates of actual revenue will be programmed annually by the District in its annual budget and service plan.
8. If additional funds become available, the SMART Board will prioritize completion of the bicycle/pedestrian pathway.
9. SMART agrees not to seek any funding that TAM or Marin Transit currently has programmed for transportation improvements in Marin County, including funds in the Regional Transportation Plan (T-2030 and T-2035) or the Federal Transportation Improvement Program.

Strategic Plan

SMART will prepare a Strategic Plan, based on the commitments in this Expenditure Plan, prior to July 2009. The Strategic Plan will identify planned investments in capital implementation, operations and maintenance for the duration of the tax. The Strategic Plan will be updated at least every five years and approved by the SMART Board of Directors. The Strategic Plan will be developed with input from the public and the Citizens Oversight Committee.

Amendments to the Plan

The SMART Board of Directors may annually review and propose amendments to this Expenditure Plan to provide for the use of additional federal, state and local funds, to account for unexpected revenues and to accommodate for any unforeseen circumstances

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARIN COUNTY

4340 Redwood Hwy, Suite F-108, San Rafael, CA 94903

July 2008

Dear Members of the LWVMC:

SMART, The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit district, has placed a twenty year quarter-cent sales tax measure on the November 4, 2008 ballot. The Marin and Sonoma Leagues have been monitoring this plan for many years and have taken a support position for past transportation measures that included a rail system. It is time for us to decide whether we will support this measure based on current circumstances and our adopted positions on transportation. With that in mind a league committee has prepared the enclosed Overview of the SMART Project.

On Monday, August 4 at 9:30 AM at the regular action committee meeting there will be a discussion followed by a recommendation to the Board.

The information in this packet will also be available on-line along with the League of Women Voters positions relevant to SMART. Please note that the Marin and Sonoma Leagues must make the same decision in order for either League to support the measure.

Come to the Action Committee, mail your comments to the LWVMC office or e-mail comments to lwvmc@marinmail.org. The League Board will consider taking a position on the SMART measure at its meeting on Wednesday, August 13.

A MEETING FOR ALL LEAGUE MEMBERS

At the regular meeting of the LWVMC Action Committee
Monday, August 4, 2008
9:30 am in the Conference Room – F 138
4340 Redwood Hwy, San Rafael

This is an opportunity for all League members to express their views and to take part in making this important decision.

We hope to see you all on August 4th.

Sincerely,



Ann Batman
President

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TRANSPORTATION POSITIONS RELEVANT TO THE SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

LWVC Support a transportation system to move people and goods which includes a variety of transportation modes, with emphasis on increased public transportation services and other viable alternatives to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT); is efficient, convenient and cost-effective; is safe and secure; serves all segments of the population and diverse geographic needs; minimizes harmful effects on the environment; is integrated with land use; and is supported by extensive public education.

LWVBA Support a long-term, comprehensive planning process consistent with the comprehensive Bay Area plan and growth management framework (currently ABAG's plan) to promote compact, transit-oriented growth patterns served by an efficient, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network. Support multi-modal, efficient, convenient, cost-effective, equitable, safe transportation planned in concert with land use and viable alternatives to reduce VMT and single occupancy vehicle use.

LWVMC Support for policies that reduce the use and dependence upon the automobile and bring the county into compliance with regional air quality standards.

Objectives of the position:

1. Transportation planning and land use planning must be done simultaneously. Neither should have lower priority than the other.
2. Development and redevelopment should be designed with a multi-modal transportation network to connect people to the places where they work, live, go to school and shop. The transit system should be linked to the regional network and have coordinated routes, schedules and fares. Car-pooling should be encouraged with the use of incentives and disincentives. Public education on alternatives to the automobile should be a high priority. Carefully designed signs are an important public education component.
3. Roads, tracks, bus routes, footpaths and bikeways should be linked to each other so that people have flexibility, mobility and a variety of choices.
4. The Northwest Pacific right-of-way should be preserved for a light rail system or other public transit corridor.
5. Serious consideration must be given to consolidating all public transit operations in Marin and Sonoma Counties, including future use of the public transit corridor.
6. Citizens who cannot drive - those who are young, elderly, low income and disabled - must be provided with non-auto transportation choices. Students should be considered to be full-fledged commuters. The loss of school buses in the past decade has contributed significantly to traffic congestion, and teenagers with cars are a major source of the increase in autos.
7. Plans should include easy access to such community facilities as hospitals, schools, libraries, shops and park/recreation facilities.
8. Non-auto choices should be designed to provide also for exercise/recreation opportunities.