

Marin/Sonoma ON TRACK

FRIENDS OF SMART • ISSUE 10 • AUGUST 2008



NEW MEXICO RAILRUNNER

On the SMART Pathway

By Andy Peri

On July 16th an important milestone was reached with SMART Directors

voting to place SMART on the November 4th ballot. Although many of us have been working hard already, in many ways this marks the beginning of the SMART Train and Pathway campaign. A significant part of the SMART project is the 70-mile bicycle/pedestrian pathway system that will run along the full SMART route from Larkspur to Cloverdale.

The 2008 SMART measure contains significant improvements since the 2006 ballot measure, including 100% funding of the \$91 million, 70-mile bicycle/pedestrian pathway (in the 2006 election the pathway was funded at only 57%). Seventy percent of the pathway will be a separated (class 1) bicycle/pedestrian pathway; the remaining 30% will consist of bike lanes and bike routes on city streets. SMART estimates that there will be 7,000 users of the pathway on weekdays and that 10,000 people will be enjoying the bicycle/pedestrian pathway on weekend days.

In addition to all of the benefits that the SMART train will bring, the bicycle/pedestrian pathway will give residents of and visitors to Marin and Sonoma



Above: The Sprinter's level boarding makes it easy for bikes to roll right on the train (see page 2). Below: SMART will provide 70 miles of bicycle/pedestrian pathway.



Counties an alternative to the car providing an opportunity to engage in a healthier lifestyle while helping to reduce local traffic congestion. The bicycle/pedestrian pathway will connect neighborhoods to shopping, recreational and downtown areas, schools, SMART stations and areas of

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JEFF KENWORTHY:

The Sustainable City

By Steve Birdlebough

Professor Jeff Kenworthy wrote *The Sustainable City* in 1999, and recently gave the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco an update on the importance of the train as structural backbone for public transportation. Several Friends of SMART heard his update of extensive studies showing the unique value of rail services.

He pointed out that investments in train service create a secure public transportation structure that leads to improved urban design with creation of attractive walkable places. These factors are often ignored by advocates of bus-only transit. Rail transit allows cities to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking and the attractiveness of train travel intensifies transit use, leading to greater bus ridership.

Statistically, cities with rail systems the world-over perform better than those that rely on bus-only trans-

portation. Kenworthy's studies show that average energy use, space sterilized by parking, tailpipe emissions, and transportation deaths are much higher for cities that rely on bus-only transit. Residents of cities without trains must also spend more on transportation leaving less money for other purposes.

City Type	Strong rail	Weak rail	Bus-only
Indicator			
Transport energy use (megajoules per capita)	16,381	17,197	39,951
Parking spaces (per thousand jobs)	186	303	585
Emissions (kg. per capita)	96	114	195
Crash fatalities (per thousand population)	5.8	7.8	13.3
Personal transport costs (GDP devoted to travel)	9.03%	9.27%	11.78%

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MISSION STATEMENT
FRIENDS OF SMART
IS A CITIZENS GROUP
DEDICATED TO
INFORMING THE PUBLIC
OF THE BENEFITS
OF RAIL AND SMART
GROWTH IN MARIN AND
SONOMA COUNTIES.

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Left: Sprinter's sleek profile. Because the Sprinter's DMU cars are bidirectional, there is no need for looping at the end of the route. Right: The Sprinter arriving at one of its stations.

Sprinting on the SPRINTER

By *Walter Strakosch, Friends of SMART
Vice-Chair, Marin*

About a month ago my wife and I had the pleasure of riding the new SPRINTER between Oceanside and Vista and then Escondido. It is 22 miles, about 50% double tracked with welded rails on concrete ties, and provides a very smooth and comfortable ride. The routing is over a rebuilt freight right-of-way (ROW) with the exception of 1.7 miles of a new section of elevated ROW that serves Cal State at San Marcos.

The rail cars are DMU's (Desiro model), relatively quiet, manufactured by Siemens and are the first use of these cars in the U.S. They are articulated (bend in the middle), attractive, seat 136 with luggage racks, have a pleasant interior and, most importantly, are large and airy and you do not get that cramped feeling that you do on a bus. I believe this to be a huge plus and, I think, has rider appeal. The cars are partially low floor and the stations provide level boarding.

The line follows the heavily built up Route 78 corridor and is both hilly and curvy with attractive stations and electronic signage. The line operates between 4:03 am and 9:20 pm.

There is a large amount of on-and-off traffic at each station. Each station has one to several bus feeder routes. Crossings appear to be almost entirely Quiet Zones—mostly by the use of lengthy concrete dividers as opposed to quad gates and, I expect, a less expensive way to go.

The State Route 78 corridor was studied starting in about 1980 and it was projected that route 78 would exceed capacity by 2000. A further study in 1987 recommended a multimodal approach including rail service. The original EIR for the project was certified in April 1990 and with changes a new draft EIR was completed in October 1996. In March 2008 the project was finally completed and service began. Even though this project made good sense early on, very much like SMART, it didn't come easy. You will always have detractors, (and it did) and you wonder the reason. Everything I saw on my ride points to a wise move and successful operation by the North Coast Transit District and, as well, for the people of North San Diego County.

Editor's Note: Check out a short video of the Sprinter in action on the SMART project web site at www.sonomamarintrain.org/index.php/sprinter_video.

Walter Strakosch is the Co-Chair of Friends of SMART, and has had a 40-year career in transportation including eight years with the Santa Fe Railroad and the last 11 years prior to retirement as Senior Planning Analyst with the Federal Transit Administration.

Why Cities Need Trains

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Bicycle and pedestrian activity, as well as farebox recovery and transit speeds, tend to increase as cities integrate rail with bus services. Transit use and available seats on buses and trains are far higher in cities with rail systems (see table at right).

Kenworthy says, "Public transport should be seen as a multi-modal system whose chief aim is to compete with and reduce dependence on the car . . ." Trains offer permanence, reliability, quality, and visibility that enable cities to have more efficient transport patterns and a more productive urban form with lower energy use.

Steve Birdlebough, former Chair of Friends of SMART and Co-Chair of the SMART Campaign Committee.

City Type	Strong rail	Weak rail	Bus-only
Indicator			
Bike-pedestrian trips	31%	21%	11%
Cost recovery (farebox contribution to operating costs)	60%	51%	35%
Speed ratio (transit vs. automobile)	0.86	0.70	0.49
Annual transit use (boardings per capita)	275	188	77
Annual transit seats available (km. per capita)	4,086	2,704	969

Jeff Kenworthy is a co-author of Sustainability and Cities (Island Press, 1999) and An International Sourcebook of Automobile Dependence 1960-1990 (Colorado University Press 1999).



By Marla Fields

There was a lot of misinformation circulating in the last election about SMART which is one reason why it is important that your contacts are well informed. One way to invite others to learn about the SMART Train and Pathway proposal, and simultaneously raise funds to educate others, is to host your own house party. They can be formal or informal, and the SMART campaign can assist with the planning. Here are a few simple steps you can take for a successful event:

Preparations

- 1. Pick a date** – A weekday around 6:30 pm offers workers a chance to come right from work, and doesn't interfere with weekend "family" time.
- 2. Select a guest speaker** – The campaign can help you arrange a guest such as State Senator Mark Leno, Marin Assemblyman Jared Huffman, or any of the many Supervisors or council members in Marin or Sonoma who endorse SMART. You could also have a representative from the Friends of SMART, Climate Protection Campaign, Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy, Sonoma County Conservation Action or one of the many other organizations that endorses SMART as an option.
Contact Sonia Tanner at 415-897-7533 for more information on your guest speaker or email her at trainacct@gmail.com.
- 3. Plan to send out invitations at least two weeks** ahead of your event, either by mail or email, and ask people to RSVP. If you wish to have some fun, try the "Get SMART" spy party theme. Sonia can provide an invitation template for you.
- 4. Make "reminder" follow-up phone calls** to your invitees at least three days before your event.

House Party Day

- 1. It is important to have a "sign-in" table** near your entry door where someone can confirm those who attend, with a bowl for contributions to the campaign. Have a well organized and gracious person stationed near the table to greet guests as they arrive, give them name tags, encourage them to sign in and confirm contact information, and help with contribution envelopes. Often it helps to have a prepared guest list on which contact information can be completed, verified, or corrected.
- 2. Most house party hosts provide light refreshments.** Some suggestions: Cheese and crackers, light fruit, soda, mineral water and/or soft alcohol. Do not feel that you need to over-extend yourself; the main purpose of this event is for people to come and learn about the SMART Train and Pathway.
- 3. Place a stack of remits, house signs and information materials near the door or sign-in table** for people to pick up as they leave. (All these materials will be provided to you by the campaign.)



Guests celebrate the opening of the new "Get SMART" movie while raising funds for the SMART Train and Pathway campaign at a recent house party in Novato. Pictured here are party hosts CEO Joseph Salesky (behind wheel and talking on a shoe phone), Marla Fields (passenger seat), Todd Fields (standing next to car with another shoe phone), Assemblyman Jared Huffman (seated), Linda Salesky and car owner Barry Buckley. Also pictured is the Maxwell' SMART's Carmen Gia car from the original "Get SMART" movie. The event raised several thousand dollars for the SMART campaign. As party cohost Marla Fields noted, "Global warming is a serious issue, but that doesn't mean we can't have a little fun while we work to resolve it!"

- 4. Introduce your guest speaker about 15 minutes after the party begins.** The presentation with Q&A should last no more than 15 minutes—10 minute presentation, 5 minutes Q&A.
- 5. Ask your party guests some questions to teach them key SMART facts in a fun and interactive way.** Sample questions can be provided by the campaign.
- 6. Encourage everyone to support SMART by taking a house sign, making a small contribution, hosting a house party and/or just telling their friends** about what they learned at the party at the conclusion of the presentation.

Post Party Follow-up

Sonia will call you the day after your event to find out how the event went and make any necessary arrangements to collect the contributions and excess materials. ✂

Marla Fields is an active member of Friends of SMART. She is President of EAST—Friends and Advocates of Sustainable Transportation; Chair of Cool the Earth, an environmental advocacy group; Task Force Leader for Safe Routes to School; and Vice Chair of the Hamilton Community Advisory Committee.



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SMART Goes to the Fair. Friends of SMART member George Ellman explains the planned route for the SMART Train and Pathway while volunteering in the SMART booth at the Marin County Fair in July.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - SUMMER/FALL 2008

August 13	Wed	9:45 am	Grand Tour of Rail & Ferry Services (see below)
August 20	Wed	11:30 am	Friends of SMART meeting, 555 Fifth St., 3rd Fl., Santa Rosa
September 10	Wed	9:45 am	Grand Tour of Rail & Ferry Services (see below)
September 17	Wed	11:30 am	Friends of SMART meeting, San Rafael
	Wed	1:30 pm	SMART Board meeting, San Rafael City Hall
October 15	Wed	11:30 am	Friends of SMART meeting, 555 Fifth St., 3rd Fl., Santa Rosa
	Wed	1:30 am	SMART Board meeting, Sonoma County Administration Bldg, Santa Rosa

For more information, go to: www.friendsofsmart.org

Bay Area Grand Tour of Rail and Ferry Services

SAVE THE DATES:

AUGUST 13 • SEPTEMBER 10 • 9:45 AM TO 6:30 PM

Beginning and ending at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal

Relax and experience the following services:

Larkspur Golden Gate Ferry

San Francisco Light Rail-N Judah Line

CalTrain Station and equipment—Fourth & King Streets

Alameda/Oakland Ferry • AMTRAK Capitol Corridor

Altamont Commuter Express • BART

Details: Carpools between Santa Rosa and the Larkspur Ferry

Terminal can be formed at the CalTrans Park 'N Ride.

Trains and ferries are accessible for bicycles and wheelchairs.

For further information and to confirm reservations, call Dani Sheehan-Meyer 707-486-3387 or e-mail: dsheehan@sonic.net.

Reservations: \$50 includes fares on ferries and trains other than BART, as well as a lunch salad at Scott's Sea Food, Jack London Square; does not include the cost of beverage.

Make checks payable to "SCT" and send with your e-mail address and phone number to:

Willard Richards, Treasurer, 1009 Hyland Dr., Santa Rosa, 95404

On the SMART Pathway

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immense natural beauty in both counties.

The bicycle/pedestrian pathway will provide direct and safe routes for users, and will therefore create incentives for increased bicycle/pedestrian activity. These kinds of facilities are a fundamentally important part of creating healthy citizenry, especially in light of the tragic obesity epidemic that is dominating American society at this time. In the US, 67% of adults are overweight or obese; the SMART pathway will provide important opportunities to increase physical activity and reduce obesity.

The SMART train along with its bicycle/pedestrian pathway will also significantly reduce Marin and Sonoma's carbon footprint. The estimated 7,000 to 10,000 users per day will allow for a significant zero-carbon transportation option for Marin and Sonoma residents and visitors.

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition, the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, Greenbelt Alliance and Sonoma County Conservation Action join Friends of SMART in being among many non-profit groups working hard to pass this environmentally superior transportation alternative for the North Bay. Please support SMART in November 2008 by voting yes on SMART.

Contact andy@marinbike.org, 415-457-0802 (Marin County) or 707-576-6632 (Sonoma County) to volunteer or to learn more about how you can help support SMART. You can also view the campaign website at: www.smarttrain2008.org.

Andy Peri is the Advocacy Outreach Coordinator for the Marin County Bicycle Coalition. ❖