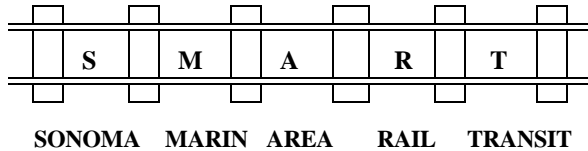


Friends of

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 Treasurer: Willard Richards
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SONOMA MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT

ISSUE 2

All Aboard!

JUNE 2005



San Rafael Train Station

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Friends of Smart

Our mission is to inform the public of the value of passenger rail in the north San Francisco Bay area and to help assure quality service

Greetings from the Chair - By Steve Birdlebough

As this newsletter goes to press we are optimistic. Serious negotiations have begun to make the best use of properties near stations in the SMART passenger rail corridor. The City of Santa Rosa is seeking funds to plan for development within the walkable area around the depot at Railroad Square. Friends of SMART commends these efforts.

Voter approval of Measure A in Marin County enables survival of important local bus services at the south end of the corridor. Bus services in the northern part of the corridor also received a boost when Sonoma County voters approved Measure M; that measure also contains critical funding to maintain momentum toward restoration of the passenger rail service that will serve as the backbone of a revitalized transit network in the North Bay.

Friends of SMART continues to sponsor a variety of tours to acquaint citizens and public officials with the benefits of passenger rail service in the North Bay, and the need to integrate it with

other transit services. As we talk with service clubs and neighborhood associations, and take literature to gatherings and festivals, we have a growing sense that most people appreciate the work SMART is doing on their behalf.

Steve Birdlebough was active in bringing Light Rail to Sacramento, and now serves as Chair of Friends of SMART.

Best Uses of SMART Properties by Willard Richards

Over the last year, the SMART Board has been giving increasing consideration of the kind of development that will contribute most to ridership and income from properties that it owns adjacent to the railroad right of way.

There are significant SMART acreages in Santa Rosa and Petaluma, and smaller properties elsewhere. How much housing should be included and what should be the building heights? Where should the commercial space be, and how much? Should there be public parking structures on or near SMART property? How should pedestrians experience the sites?

Discussions have been lively and have revealed the differing interests of the transportation agency and cities, as well as their common desires. In Petaluma, the city has already been active in specific planning around the SMART-owned property. In downtown Novato, a development of property adjacent to the historic station is under active consideration.

Plans for development of the SMART property at Railroad Square in Santa Rosa are proceeding rapidly, with an expectation that a development team will be

Continued. p.2

Successful FRIENDS OF SMART TOURS

continue

Providing a day of transit travel around the Bay

Tours depart from Larkspur Landing at 9:45 a.m.

**Thursday July 14th,
 Wednesday August 10
 Thursday September 15**

Call (707) 576-6632 for reservations

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and don't necessarily represent the opinions of Friends of SMART. We welcome all feedback and contributions.

**Funding for a North Bay Transit Network
by George Ellman**

Last November, voters in both Marin and Sonoma counties approved sales tax measures to fund transit, bicycle, and highway needs. Although money is just beginning to flow from these enactments, this funding stream is already making a significant difference for the future of train service.

The most direct benefit is availability of up to \$23 million over the next three years to complete initial steps that will accelerate the development of passenger rail service for Marin and Sonoma Counties. The work will include obtaining final environmental clearance, engineering, grade crossing improvements, and station site development. Some of this funding may be used to leverage \$17 million in State bond monies set aside for rail service by Proposition 116.

In addition to the rail project funding, more money has been made available to maintain and improve bus services in both counties. This is important, because, as the backbone of a transit network, passenger rail service must have connections with capable bus services at most stations. As the North Bay counties have taken responsibility for funding higher levels of transit, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has begun to compare the passenger rail project favorably with other rail proposals.

George Ellman is a former Mayor of Tiburon and served on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission

MEASURE M HELPS SPUR RAIL DEVELOPMENT

The approval of Measure M by the voters has given the passenger rail project a huge boost. There is now a real opportunity to have the train back on the tracks by 2009.

*Sonoma county Supervisor
and Smart Board member Tim Smith*

**Best Uses for SMART Properties
by Willard Richards**

Cont'd from p. 1

selected before the end of 2005. To facilitate development, the City of Santa Rosa formed the Transit Oriented Redevelopment Project Area, which includes the SMART property and several adjacent parcels. The EIR for this redevelopment project assumed that at full build-out, the SMART property would contain a public parking structure for 1088 cars and no housing. When the City Council certified this EIR, it passed a resolution that it would benefit the project if the low- and moderate-income housing required by redevelopment law were built elsewhere.

The SMART Board has the obligation that all property managers have to manage its properties for the benefit of the owners, the people of Sonoma and Marin counties. The Board has is seeking to obtain ridership and revenue to support rail operations from the development of its properties. Economic analysis of the site by SMART consultants suggests that the best returns would be given by mixed use housing over first floor commercial space with minimum space devoted to parking. You are encouraged to provide your input at the public forums.

*Willard Richards is a retired Air Quality consultant
and the Friends of SMART Treasurer*

**Smart Neighborhoods for SMART Stations
by Joel Woodhull**

Cities and towns along the SMART line are urged to plan for densities near the train stations that will put reasonable concentrations of homes and jobs within walking distance of the passenger rail service. Thoughtful planning for the areas closest to the rail stations will benefit the cities, the train, and the environment.

There are more than eight square miles of land within walking distance of the proposed railway stations in Marin and Sonoma Counties, but much of it is not heavily populated. A review of data from the 2000 census shows that less than 45,000 people live within one-half mile of the 14 station sites on the SMART corridor. Over the next 20 to 50 years, the properties closest to the stations could easily provide more housing and jobs and make for a more vibrant downtown.

Plans for these station areas would have little effect on more than 520 square miles of Marin County, nor on more than 1500 square miles of Sonoma County. This will allow vast parts of the North Bay to remain rural.

More than eight thousand people live within a half mile of the Cotati Station site. These people live mostly in one- and two-story buildings. It is not necessary to rely on high-rise apartments to accommodate significant numbers of apartments and condominiums near other rail stations on the corridor to meet such a demand.

Most of the great cities of Europe aren't dominated by high-rise buildings. More important, they don't provide more square footage for cars than for people. We in the North Bay have an opportunity to do at least as well.

Joel Woodhull is a former Manager for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and Chair of the Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Coalition

FAST FACTS

Number of Households within ½ mile of Railroad Square, Santa Rosa: 1600

Number of Households within ½ mile of Cotati Station: 3400

Transit use in California by residents within 1/2 mile of stations: 26.5%

Congestion will cause travel time in California to increase by 48% within 20 years

Ridership increase over the last 8 months in the AMTRAK Capitol Corridor (between Auburn and San Jose): 17.5%

What will SMART trains look like? by Walt Strakosch

Selecting the type of passenger rail vehicle to run between Cloverdale and Larkspur is an important responsibility for the SMART Board. The public expects trains that are comfortable, quiet, reliable and attractive. After a review process that took over a year and involved panels of citizens and experts, attention has focused on self-powered cars called Diesel Multiple Units (DMU). These units do not require a separate locomotive, and can be operated as one- to three-car trains either single- or double-deck depending on ridership demands (see insets).



Austrian Desireo



Colorado Rail Car



Estonia DI-588



Spanish Class 598

Currently the vehicle that best meets the SMART corridor requirements seems to be the Colorado Railcar. This recently-developed vehicle complies with Federal safety standards, and has the speed and acceleration required to meet proposed schedules. The first of these cars has been operating in Florida for about a year, and appears to have been quite successful. However, recent federal approval of new train control technology may open the field for lighter DMU vehicles made by other manufacturers with long experience.

It usually takes up to two years after ordering before the cars are delivered and placed in service. With other rail lines interested in the Colorado Railcar, it may be important for SMART to consider other possible cars. A decision is likely by Spring of 2007.

Walt Strakosch is a retired senior planning analyst with the Federal Transit Administration

Connecting Transit Services by Steve Birdlebough

The Passenger Rail Forum, a joint project of Friends of SMART and the Sonoma County League of Women Voters, presented the third in a series of informative talks on North Bay Transit issues in May. Tom Matoff, Director for Transportation Planning at LTK Engineering Services in Sacramento, described the characteristics a transit network where the connections between buses, trains, and ferries are designed with the convenience of the transfer rider in mind.

Many European cities have demonstrated successful integration of various forms of transit through establishment of federations and associations that combine planning, marketing and fare collection systems to provide a comprehensive, seamless service. In addition to integrated schedules and fares, common stations with good signage and direct pathways between vehicles are essential.

Matoff points out that such integration permits transit networks to achieve high levels of transit ridership, even in low-density communities. In smaller cities, where the average wait for a vehicle often exceeds seven minutes, timed transfer systems are essential. In such a system, buses, trains, and ferries arrive at various connecting nodes simultaneously, permitting passengers to transfer between lines and transit modes as often as necessary to reach a particular destination. Experience has demonstrated that people are willing to make transfers when the system is reliable and convenient.

Tom drew on his experience with the San Francisco Muni system, Portland's Tri-Met, and in Sacramento where he implemented a timed transfer service that helped make Light Rail succeed. He emphasized that high transit ridership depends on the ability of patrons to easily transfer from one bus or rail line to another in a well-designed network that reaches into all neighborhoods.

The Bay Area is still working to establish fare integration. In San Francisco a monthly pass works on the Muni and BART, but elsewhere there tends to be merely a collection of transit agencies. Thus Sonoma and Marin Counties have an opportunity to show the rest of the Bay Area transit community the way toward full integration of services.

Information Form

Please check any of the following:

Yes, I am interested in:

- Submitting to **All Aboard!**
- Publishing newsletter
- Help with mailing
- Volunteer at events
- Other _____

Yes, I would like to contribute to helping establish passenger rail service

- Enclosed is my \$35 individual subscription
- Enclosed is \$ _____

Make tax-deductible checks payable to Sonoma County Tomorrow (SCT) which is the fiscal umbrellas for Friends of SMART.
Mail to: Willard Richards, 1009 Hyland Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

We welcome your comments

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Phone/Fax number _____

EARTH DAY AT COLLEGE OF MARIN

Friends of SMART had a colorful display at the Earth Day celebration hosted by Students for Social Responsibility at College of Marin this year. Visitors were curious about the route that the train would use, and the types of rail vehicles being considered. For



adults, the most popular element of the display was the "I'd Rather Ride a Train" bumper sticker. The children enjoyed playing with the miniature vehicles.

We had many useful conversations with supporters of the SMART project, as well as with those concerned about cost or development issues, or who are reserving judgment about the project until the environmental impact studies are published. Several people wanted to know who would oppose the train and why. A few people asked about the status of urban growth limits at Cloverdale, and whether trains would encourage longer commutes. Over two dozen visitors signed up to get announcements and further information about the SMART project.

The display boards are available to Friends of SMART members who want to make presentations or distribute literature at other events.

Important Rail -related events

Tuesday June 21 at 7 pm

SMART Board hearing on Railroad Square property at CHOPS, Santa Rosa.

Wednesday June 29 and Thursday July 6 at 6 pm

Public Forum on SMART RR Square property at 6th St. Playhouse, Santa Rosa

Wednesday July 6 at 10 am.

SMART Real Estate Committee at Novato Humane Society,

Friday July 8 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tour of El Cerrito Del Norte and Fruitvale TOD's

Thursday July 14th, Wednesday August 10, and Thursday, September 15 from 9.45 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Grand Tour of Bay Area Rail and Ferry Services

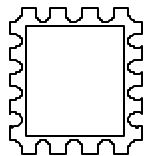
Wednesday July 20 at 12 and 1:30 p.m.

Friends of SMART meeting and SMART Board meeting at Petaluma Community Center

Saturday, October 15

Visit to Sacramento for the opening of the Folsom light rail line in Sacramento

Friends of SMART
404A Mendocino Avenue
Santa Rosa
CA 95404



Address

