



March 15, 2011

Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit Board of Directors  
c/o Dave Heath, Interim General Manager  
750 Lindero Street, Suite 200  
San Rafael, CA 94901

**Re: The SMART project is the train and pathway: Don't cut the MUP**

Chair Brown, Vice Chair McGlashan and Members of the SMART Board:

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) and Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (SCBC) are writing to provide information for SMART's March 16 workshop and upcoming decisions regarding SMART's financial plan and cost saving options.

Our letter is intended to help guide recommendations regarding completion of the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) portion of the Multi-Use Pathway (MUP) from Santa Rosa to downtown San Rafael. **We respectfully request that the SMART Board allocate \$40M in Measure Q funds for construction of the IOS of the MUP. An additional \$25M in MUP funds have or will need to be raised for a total cost of \$65M for the pathway within the IOS.**

Since 1999, the SMART MUP has been planned to parallel the SMART train along the entire SMART system from Larkspur to Cloverdale. The pathway played a key role in the passage of Measure Q which funded the MUP for the 70 mile length of the project, and was included in the expenditure plan for \$91M.

The 75 word ballot statement for Measure Q billed the project as the train and pathway, and SMART has always been framed, planned and designed as a dual-nature project that includes both rail and pathway, to maximize use of the transportation right-of-way corridor and to reduce traffic around stations.

While it is very unfortunate that portions of the train system must now be phased because of the global economic downturn, it is important to note that the pathway is also being phased. As SMART moves forward to build the initial operating segment (IOS) from downtown Santa Rosa to downtown San Rafael, MCBC and SCBC support proportionate phasing for both the train and the MUP. We also

urge proportionate and (virtually) simultaneous funding and construction of the MUP for each train segment of the project that is built. This will save time and money for SMART, and get the IOS portion of the train and pathway project that the public voted for built and operating as soon as possible.

As you deliberate SMART's funding plan, MCBC and SCBC respectfully request that the SMART Board consider these recommendations and ideas:

- 1) **Commit to completing the IOS portion of the MUP by the start of train operations.** The SMART MUP is and always has been an integral part of the SMART system. It will provide numerous benefits, including getting passengers to and from train stations, reducing the need for parking (which is limited at many stations), and it will also help to reduce traffic congestion in and around SMART stations. To build the IOS MUP by 2014, which is estimated to cost \$42M, will require that most or all of the funding come from Measure Q, as there are only limited other bicycle and pedestrian funding sources available. So far, nearly \$2M in matching funds for the SMART MUP has been raised, so \$40M is still needed.
- 2) **Make realistic funding assumptions about bike/ped matching grants.** MTC recommended cutting 1/3 of the pathway, which represents \$14M; however, there is not \$14M in funding available over the next three years to make up that cost for the SMART MUP, so if those cuts are made the MUP will not be completed by the start of train operations, which would be detrimental to the overall project. There are rumors that there is "lots of bike money available", but this is not the case. By our calculations, a maximum of \$5-\$6M is potentially available from known sources (in a hostile federal environment), and that includes an assumption that the CMAs will dedicate 50% of their future MTC Regional Bicycle Program funds to the MUP. Here are the potential bike/ped funding sources:
  - a) \$1 million SCTA from Measure M – this is secured
  - b) \$650,000 received through CTC from EEMP for Marin and Sonoma – this is secured
  - c) \$130,000 from the SF Bay Trail Project for MUP final design from Civic Center to Smith Ranch Road – this is secured
  - d) \$1.4M from Marin's Pilot Program (SMART is requesting \$1.4M - it's not clear if County staff will recommend this).
  - e) Regional Bike Program Funds – about \$2.4M total. Explanation: Around 2013 or 2014, MTC will likely provide Regional Bike Funds to Marin and Sonoma Counties. If the funding is similar to the last allocation, Marin may receive about \$1.6M and Sonoma may receive about \$3.2M. If the CMAs choose to dedicate 50% of this funding to the MUP, SMART could potentially secure approximately \$2.4M.
  - f) Bicycle Transportation Account grant: There is only \$7M available for the entire state of California. If SMART is lucky, the agency may be able to secure approximately \$300,000. SMART is seeking a lead agency to apply for a grant right now.

*TOTAL:* Only 1.78M in matching funds have currently been secured for the SMART MUP. SMART should not count on more than \$5-6M in total bicycle and pedestrian matching funds over the next three-four years.

*NOTE:* If a decision is made to seek all of the aforementioned bicycle and pedestrian funding, SMART will be competing with other worthy bicycle and pedestrian safety projects needed in Marin and Sonoma counties.

- 3) **Recognize that the total cost of the MUP IOS is actually \$65M (\$42M for the SMART portion of the MUP IOS, plus another \$23M in the IOS which is not being built SMART).** When keeping in mind MUP costs, it's important to note that 10 miles of the 40 miles of the IOS MUP are not being built or maintained by SMART.
  - A) Marin agencies have already spent \$14M to build the two mile segment of bike lanes and pathways from North San Pedro Road to the San Rafael Transit Center; these segments were funded through Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program federal funds (\$1.4M), MTC's Regional Bicycle Program federal funds (\$600,000), and Marin's Measure A (\$12M). These pathway segments will not be maintained by SMART.
  - B) The eight mile section of the MUP for the Sonoma Marin Narrows (Novato to Petaluma) will be built through the highway project along side the freeway. That multiuse facility is estimated at costing \$8M. These segments will not be maintained by SMART either.
  - C) In Santa Rosa south of the future downtown station, the 1.3 mile segment of the SMART path from Hearn Avenue to the Joe Rodota Trail has a cost is \$1,121,460 which has been raised from other sources, with \$620,000 from MTC's Regional Bicycle Program (federal funds) and \$501,460 from the Southwest Santa Rosa Redevelopment Funds (local funds). The funding covers environmental, design and engineering, permits, compaction tests, one pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Colgan Creek Channel, and construction. As such, through the aforementioned three projects, it becomes clear that agencies other than SMART are already funding \$23M for the alignment for the SMART MUP (for a total IOS MUP cost of \$65M).
  
- 4) **Evaluate the need for conducting federal environmental clearance on the MUP and consider stopping this effort on sections of the MUP where Measure Q funds will be used.** There is no need for federal environmental clearance for sections of the MUP that will be built with local Measure Q funds, as the pathway has already been cleared through CEQA. It will save SMART time and money to stop the federal process on portions of the MUP being constructed with local dollars, as the federal process will take another 18 months, and the construction bid environment is currently favorable. For MUP "Phase 2" sections and for MUP sections outside the IOS, we recommend continuing with federal environmental clearance.

- 5) **Issue a design-build contract for the MUP ASAP.** Once the SMART board has made decision regarding funding the MUP with Measure Q funds, a design build contact should be issued for the MUP IOS as soon as possible so that the MUP can be completed by start of SMART operations in 2014. This will enable SMART to reap the benefits of the currently favorable construction bid environment. Furthermore it is vital that the final MUP design and construction be conducted in concert with the rail and signal and crossing design-build contracts. It is essential that there be direct coordination within the many areas where the MUP and rail design overlap. This coordination will also save time and money for SMART.

**For all of the reasons stated above, MCBC and SCBC respectfully request that the SMART Board fund the SMART IOS MUP using \$40M in Measure Q funds. This takes into account that another \$25M will or has already been raised in matching funds for the MUP, therefore, the SMART contribution to the MUP would be only 61.5%.** Cutting portions of the MUP is not a viable cost saving option, as the project has always been the “train and pathway” and the MUP has already been disproportionately cut with respect to the rail project.

In addition, people will be able to use the pathway day or night. The public will experience maximum benefits from SMART’s commitment to voters for the train and pathway by building the full MUP planned for in the IOS at the same time that SMART constructs the tracks and crossings.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests and for your hard work to get the train and pathway rolling. We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming meetings and to further solidifying SMART’s commitment to building the multi-use pathway through SMART funding plan.

Sincerely,



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