



FRIENDS OF **SMART**

Friends of SMART are a non-profit citizens group formed to ensure the best possible SMART Train service for citizens of Sonoma and Marin Counties, and to educate the public about the benefits of rail transportation for our community.

THE SMART TRAIN IS OUR FUTURE

The remarkable work of Sonoma Marin Area Regional Transit (SMART) to re-establish passenger rail service after the Great Recession of 2009 will benefit North Bay residents for generations to come. It is significant that the trains already take about a thousand cars a day off the roads, and it is important for our growing population to be able to locate close to public transportation and reduce the need to drive a car. The housing and mixed-use developments that will arise within walking and cycling distance of the SMART train stations are as important as the option to ride a train.

SMART now serves 80% of the population included in its initial vision, and has provided more than a million and a half rides since operations began in 2017. In the last ten years its ¼ cent sales tax has produced \$289 million in revenue. These funds have attracted more than \$300 million in State & Federal grants to construct and operate the first stages of the Larkspur to Cloverdale system. Additionally, SMART Trains serve riders late into the evening and two stations have been built that were not part of the original plan. Service to the City of Larkspur, providing access to the ferry will commence soon, and work has begun to extend the line to the Windsor Station.

The success in serving residents and employers along SMART's present route has aroused interest in extending service eastward to Fairfield-Suisun and the Capitol Corridor. This would connect North Bay passenger service with the national rail network enabling part of our labor force to commute by rail from that area.

The SMART Board has adopted a strategic plan that calls for extension of its existing 1/4-cent sales tax to be consistent with the 50-year life of its tracks. * With such an extension, SMART can continue seeking funding from government and private sources that underwrite all modes of transportation to construct the rail and trail system north of Windsor. Passenger operations can be sustained and can grow into the future if, in March, 2020, the voters approve a 30-year extension of SMART's primary source of funding.

To learn more, please visit the Friends of SMART website:

<http://www.friendsofsmart.com> or follow us <http://www.FaceBook/friendsofSMART.com>

or call us at (707) 576-6632



FRIENDS OF SMART

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO RENEW THE SMART SALES TAX NOW

*SMART has made great strides in building a new transit system that provides an alternative to Highway 101 for Sonoma and Marin Counties. The progress SMART has made since the Great Recession has meant more service than was originally envisioned in Measure Q, and a number of stations added that were not part of the original vision. While the entire 70-mile system has not been completed, SMART has built a system that can be sustained and can grow into the future if its primary funding source is secured. SMART’s ¼ cent sales tax has produced \$289 million in revenues that have been leveraged to bring in over \$300 million for building and operating the system. This has resulted in \$600 million of direct investment in the transportation infrastructure—serving 80% of the ridership the system was originally designed to reach.

This plan focuses on a path forward in which SMART will ask voters in March 2020 to continue the progress and success of the system and extend the current sales tax past its 2029 expiration date. Passage of the measure will allow the District to restructure its debt and put more annual funding into operations. Not only would this make current system sustainable; it would also provide revenue to operate future extensions to Healdsburg and Cloverdale when outside funding becomes available for construction. It will also provide funds for operation and maintenance of existing and pending segments of the multiple-use pathway. In the coming years SMART will continue its successful efforts to seek out regional federal and state funds to extend the system beyond the current system. *



*Excerpted from the SMART Strategic Plan 2019- Draft, pages 21-22

***North Bay Leadership Council’s Poll on SMART Tax Renewal Shows 69% Voter Support**

POLL: 69% OF SONOMA AND MARIN COUNTY VOTERS SUPPORT A 30-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT (SMART)

¼ CENT, VOTER-APPROVED, SALES TAX

Data also shows SMART has a very positive image overall and is most popular among its riders

PETALUMA – Nearly 7 in 10 voters in Sonoma and Marin Counties support extending SMART’s 1/4 cent sales tax for an additional 30 years, according to a North Bay Leadership Council poll released today.

By a 69% to 21% margin, Sonoma and Marin County residents both registered and likely to vote in next year’s March primary election say they would support a ballot measure extending the SMART ¼ cent sales tax an additional 30 years. Democrats (58% of poll respondents) overwhelmingly support the extension 77% to 15%, while Republicans (19% of respondents) support it 60% to 30%, and Independents (17% of respondents) back it 54% to 28%.

“It doesn’t matter what sub-group of the electorate you look at, voters across-the-board support the 30-year ¼ cent sales tax extension for SMART,” said North Bay Leadership Council’s President and CEO Cynthia Murray. “Voters know the SMART train is an intelligent green transportation alternative that has reduced greenhouse gas emissions, taken cars off of Highway 101, and is a valuable public asset that should continue to be taken care of and invested in.”

The poll shows SMART enjoying high name recognition and favorability. SMART’s total name identification among all voters is 88%; with a favorable/unfavorable rating of 59% to 15%. SMART is most popular among its riders: 88% of riders rate SMART favorably, 90% say they are satisfied using the train, 60% give SMART an excellent or above average job rating; and by an 87% to 8% margin support the 30-year extension of the ¼ cent sales tax.

“Voters who know SMART best, and ride the train, like SMART best,” said Murray.

Over the past two years SMART trains have carried 1.4 million passengers, over 5,000 who require wheelchair access, and 133,000 bicycles. If the existing sales tax is renewed, without increasing the rate, it would generate \$40 million annually, allow SMART to restructure its construction debt saving taxpayers \$12 million a year, and fully-fund rail operations from Larkspur to Windsor for 30 years.

This poll was fielded September 5-10, 2019 by The Wickers Group LLC among 500 residents of Sonoma County and Marin County both registered and considered likely to vote in next year’s March primary election. At .95 confidence level this data carries a margin of error of +/- 4.35%. A 52% female/48% male quota was enforced for this study.



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