



March 10, 2010

Lillian Hames  
General Manager  
Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit  
750 Lindero Street, Suite 200  
San Rafael, CA 94901

**Re: Rail Car Design Specifications**

Dear Ms. Hames:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide preliminary comments regarding Rail Car design. Below, please find joint comments from the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, and Transportation Alternatives for Marin.

We respectfully request that these comments be considered as part of your final rail car specifications for the Request for Proposals that will be used to procure up to 22 individual SMART vehicles.

We want to ensure that there is adequate bike storage on SMART trains. By providing adequate capacity for bikes on board SMART rail cars, there will be a reduced need and burden for SMART to provide parking and shuttle services. Additionally, such capacity will help to reduce the dependency on cars to get passengers from home to SMART and to passengers' final destinations. The recommendations will help SMART to maximize efficiency:

**Folding Bikes**

Because folding bikes can be folded such that they take up space equivalent to a medium suitcase, we request that SMART not limit in any way the number of folding bikes that can be carried on SMART trains. Please design overhead bins to fit a folding bike, and also consider under-seat storage for folding bikes.

**Vertical and Horizontal On-board Bike Storage**

Please consider including both vertical *and* horizontal bike storage facilities on board SMART rail cars. Vertical bike storage is the most space-efficient but cannot accommodate all riders, including ones that do not have the ability to lift their bike into a vertical position as well as commuters that have racks or baskets, which disallow the bike being placed in the vertical position.

### **Quantity of Bikes on Board**

One of the most important principles regarding bikes on board SMART trains should be flexibility. Convertible spaces, including flip-up seats should be maximized thereby allowing for bike parking space that would otherwise not be available. SMART should have policies that riders bringing bikes on board should not be bumped under any circumstances. Flexible bike parking spaces on trains would help facilitate this end.

### **Capacity**

Bike capacity on rail cars should be (or be expandable to) at least to 20% of each rail car passenger capacity. This does not have to be exclusive space but can be shared/convertible space with flip-up seats, etc. (see *Quantity of Bikes on Board* above). Each rail car should, at a minimum, always accommodate at least 24 bicycles.

### **Seat Mounting Hardware**

SMART should have seat mounting hardware that allows for seats to be moved, removed or adjusted by maintenance staff to accommodate weekly or seasonal bike ridership changes.

### **Bike Racks at Each Rail Car Entrance**

Bikes need to be able to board at and be stored near either door entrance (assuming more than one door per rail car). This will reduce boarding times and maximize bike parking flexibility for riders.

### **Bike Lockers, Bike Sharing**

We have provided comments via our station planning letter indicating that bike lockers, bike racks and bike sharing can be an important way of reducing the need for bikes on board. This will take some of the burden off the number of bikes on board but we still need to have adequate capacity on-board SMART trains.

### **Bike-Only Rail Cars for Weekend**

Because SMART will likely become very popular for riders wishing to take advantage of SMART's train into and from Sonoma County and the wine country, SMART should consider having an extra non-powered rail car on weekend trains that would be used for bicycles only as the numbers of bicycles could far exceed the train capacity during those times.

**Bikes on Board- No Fees**

Bicyclists should not be charged fees for bringing their bikes on board SMART trains. Bicycle users are already paying for a train ticket, reducing the need for shuttle services, and reducing the burden on car parking facilities, as well as providing environmental benefits to air, land and water.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these rail car design comments. We look forward to seeing the updated specifications that will be used for rail car procurement, and to collaborating together further on the design and implementation of the train and pathway system.

Sincerely,



Andy Peri  
Marin County Bicycle  
Coalition



Patrick Seidler  
Transportation  
Alternatives for Marin



Christine Culver  
Sonoma County Bicycle  
Coalition