



www.marinbike.org

V 415 456 3469
F 415 456 9344
733 Center Blvd.
Fairfax, CA 94930

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July 1, 2010

Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Rm. 275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: SMART: Pathway is a Necessary Component

Dear Members of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury,

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC), a countywide bicycle advocacy organization with more than 1,600 members, is writing in response to your June 18, 2010 report entitled, "SMART: Steep Grade Ahead".

MCBC respects the role of the Civil Grand Jury as a watchdog group for the County of Marin, however, we strongly disagree with recommendation R8 on page 15 which states, "In light of the \$155 million shortfall, the Board defer plans for the \$91 million bicycle/pedestrian pathway until additional funding be secured."

There are many reasons why this would be unwise, could jeopardize funding, and would be against what the voters of Marin and Sonoma counties voted for under Measure Q. Please consider:

- The SMART multi-use pathway is part of the official ballot language of Measure Q passed by nearly 70% of Marin and Sonoma County voters in November 2008; it's not an optional element to remove or defer the pathway. In fact, the entire campaign was billed as the SMART "Train and Pathway". It is likely that SMART may not have passed without inclusion of the pathway component.
- The SMART multi-use pathway, at a total cost of \$91 million, is also part of the SMART expenditure plan that was approved by voters.
- The pathway will provide access to all 14 SMART stations, helping to reduce traffic congestion around stations and providing an important means for people to access the train sustainably and easily.
- The pathway is particularly important for many of the SMART stations that have no automobile parking as it will allow riders to have non-motorized access to stations; this will support SMART ridership which will be a vital revenue source for SMART once train service is up and running.
- In addition to being an important part of a new vision for sustainable transportation for the North Bay, the pathway will serve as a necessary maintenance facility for SMART along its right of way.
- Many of the most promising sources of federal funding for SMART require multi-modal elements such as bicycle/pedestrian facilities to be included in projects. Delaying or excluding the multi-use pathway could jeopardize these funds.
- Pathway use estimates prior to 2008 indicated that there would be 7,000 to 10,000 pathway users per day, which is a highly significant

- proportion of the overall users of the SMART system.
- The SMART Train and Pathway represent a new sustainable transportation paradigm for the North Bay. The SMART pathway should be constructed simultaneously with whichever sections of the rail system are being built first - this will result in cost savings overall for the construction of the full project.

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition has been a partner with SMART since 1999, and as we stated in our March 16, 2010 letter to SMART (<http://www.marinbike.org/Campaigns/SMART/SMARTFinancesPathway.pdf>), we remain committed to assisting the agency with securing funding to address the identified shortfall. In fact, we are currently working with SMART to help prepare a federal TIGER II grant application, which would fund components of the train and pathway.

When completed, the SMART multi-use pathway will provide a needed alternative to traffic congestion along the US 101 travel corridor, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, contribute to the health and vitality of our local communities and citizens, and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

Sincerely,



Deb Hubsmith, Advocacy Director
Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Cc: Lillian Hames, SMART General Manager
SMART Board of Directors
Marin County Board of Supervisors