

Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District



General Manager's Report – April 2020

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MARKETING

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

Serving the Community

The COVID-19 crisis has been an unprecedented challenge for our community, and it will continue to develop and evolve. As Marin and Sonoma counties adjust to social distancing and shelter in place orders, all transit agencies have seen a significant decline in ridership. SMART has been operating on a modified service schedule since March 16, maintaining limited service for riders who rely on public transit to conduct essential business and access vital services, such as healthcare, pharmacies and grocery stores. Many critical employees, such as first responders and healthcare professionals, rely on public transportation to commute to work.

SMART is proud to continue serving our community, providing essential public transportation. Thank you for your continued support through these challenging times. To stay up-to-date with the latest information, follow SMART on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or subscribe to our e-newsletter online at [SonomaMarinTrain.org](#). Text 'SMART' to 888-777 to subscribe to service alerts sent directly to your smartphone.

Temporary Schedule Changes

SMART is currently operating a temporary, limited service schedule. The modified weekday schedule operates 16 train trips daily, serving all stations. Weekend service remains cancelled until further notice. You can view the current train schedule online at [SonomaMarinTrain.org/schedules-fares](#), and download a printable [PDF of the temporary schedule](#).

Social Distancing

Please follow the social distancing guidelines posted at SMART stations and onboard trains. SMART continues to maintain a twice-daily thorough onboard cleaning and sanitation of all trains. SMART's [Social Distancing Protocol](#) is available online.

Passengers are required to wear a facial covering while on board SMART trains and at station platforms, per local public health orders for Marin and Sonoma counties, and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Signage has been posted at all station platforms and onboard trains.

Board of Directors and Citizen's Oversight Committee

All public SMART meetings are being conducted via Zoom Teleconference until further notice, to comply with local and state shelter in place orders. Detailed information on attending a meeting is posted on SMART's website in advance of the meeting. Members of the public have several options to watch the meeting via livestream and participate in the meeting using Zoom teleconferencing. Questions can also be submitted online in advance of the meeting.

For meeting information and to view previous Board of Directors meetings, visit [SonomaMarinTrain.org/board-of-directors](#).



Information and previous meetings from the Citizen's Oversight Committee can be found online at SonomaMarinTrain.org/citizens-oversight-committee.

Media Releases and e-Newsletters issued to 10,000 recipients

[April 21: Facial coverings are required on SMART](#)

[April 17: SMART Citizen Oversight Committee to meet via Zoom teleconference](#)

[April 16: Passengers are encouraged to wear a facial covering on board trains](#)

[April 10: SMART to hold Board of Directors Meeting via Zoom teleconference](#)

[April 7: SMART news and activities \(e-Newsletter update\)](#)

[April 3: SMART will implement further temporary reductions to service levels on Monday, April 6](#)

Media | News Coverage

- April 25, *Golden Gate Bridge traffic down more than 70%: report* (KNTV NBC Channel 11)
- April 24, *CA: Marin transit providers cleared for \$46M in virus aid* (Mass transit Magazine)
- April 24, *TTC lays off employees; California counties order rail passengers to wear masks* (Progressive Railroading)
- April 23, *Editorial: SMART should make cuts, consider new plan for support* (Marin Independent Journal)
- April 22, *Marin transit providers cleared for \$46M in virus aid* (Marin Independent Journal)
- April 21, *Face coverings mandatory on SMART trains: coronavirus* (Rohnert Park, Novato, San Rafael Patch)
- April 19, *Marin transit agencies allotted \$46M in federal relief* (Marin Independent Journal)
- April 17, *MTC unveils plan to distribute \$780M corona relief to transit agencies* (KPIX CBS Channel 5)
- April 17, *Grab your mask: new Sonoma County health order requires them as of Friday* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)
- April 17, *SMART reduces train service* (The Community Voice)
- April 16, *MTC releases plan to distribute \$780M in federal funds to transit agencies* (SF Gate)
- April 16, *SMART faces bleak financial future due to tax defeat, coronavirus* (Novato Patch)
- April 16, *SMART sales tax measure could come before voters again* (Petaluma Patch)
- April 15, *SMART proposes \$6M in cuts following tax defeat, pandemic* (Marin Independent Journal)
- April 15, *SMART considers cutting staff, trains after election loss, economic uncertainty from coronavirus* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)

- April 15, *SMART Board set to discuss cuts, agency's future at first meeting since election loss* (Mass Transit Magazine)
- April 14, *SMART Board set to discuss cuts, agency's future at first meeting since election loss* (Petaluma Argus Courier)
- April 14, *Bike/ped path coming as part of highway 101 widening project* (KSRO 1350 radio)
- April 14, *SMART's board of directors to have budget meeting tomorrow* (KSRO 1350 radio)
- April 13, *SMART Board set to discuss cuts, agency's future at first meeting since election loss* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)
- April 6, *Muni, SMART trains reduce service* (KTVU Fox Channel 2)
- April 6, *Marin Transit agencies set to get federal aid* (Marin Independent Journal)
- April 6, *Interview: Farhad Mansourian on changes to SMART's service* (KSRO 1350 radio)
- April 5, *North Bay commuter rail system 'SMART' makes second cutback in two weeks* (KSRO 1350 radio)
- April 4, *As ridership plummets, SMART slashes weekday schedule; no weekend trains* (KPIX CBS Channel 5)
- April 4, *SMART reduces weekday train service by half* (SFBay.CA)
- April 4, *SMART cuts service as ridership declines due to coronavirus pandemic* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)
- April 3, *SMART cuts more trips amid 90% drop in ridership: coronavirus* (Petaluma Patch)
- April 2, *SPUR Talk: Rules for successful mega projects* (Streets Blog SF)
- March 31, *CA: North Bay public transit agencies set to receive portion of 1.3 billion in federal stimulus package* (Mass Transit Magazine)
- March 29, *North Bay public transit agencies set to receive portion of 1.3 billion in federal stimulus package* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)
- March 27, *Sonoma County's congressmen say stimulus bill provides vital aid, but more will be needed* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)
- March 26, *City, SMART reach tentative deal for second train station* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)
- March 24, *Cash-drained Marin Transit agencies join call for federal aid* (Marin Independent Journal)
- March 24, *North Bay transit schedules cut under coronavirus isolation order* (Santa Rosa Press Democrat)

CAPITAL PROJECTS

MULTI USE PATHWAY PROJECTS

Southpoint Street in Petaluma to Main Street in Penngrove and Golf Course Drive in Rohnert Park to West Robles Avenue in Santa Rosa

- SMART received the proposals for design services in Mid-April and in the process of reviewing them.
- SMART is aiming to award the design contract by late-May.
- Design is planned to begin in the summer 2020.

WINDSOR EXTENSION PROJECT

- Design work is on-going.
- Demolition of track work started in Mid-March at the north end of the project but was put on hold due to the Coronavirus shelter in place order for the month of April. Construction activities will resume on May 4rd.
- Some crossing panels have been delivered, concrete tie delivery is approximately 50% complete, and the first rail delivery is expected in by end of April.
- Coordination with the Town of Windsor and County of Sonoma is on-going.
- Environmental permitting is underway.



Track Demolition North of the Windsor Station



Concrete Tie Delivery

Utility Construction by Town of Windsor in preparation of SMART Extension – Windsor River Road and Windsor Road (near Windsor Depot)



photo credit Tom Rennie



photo credit Tom Rennie

REAL ESTATE

PRIVATE CROSSINGS

Staff drafted and sent a license for a private crossing at the request of a property owner on the Brazos Branch that is immediately adjacent to the tracks. Staff has received a response from the owner and is working on responding.

PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS (IN PROCESS)

Downtown Petaluma Station Property: Staff continues to work with the proposed purchaser of the property on a final Purchase and Sale Agreement. Part of the agreement includes working with the owner of the billboard sign and its removal prior to close of escrow. The billboard sign will be removed by the end of April. SMART is also responsible for the removal of the tracks and ties prior to the close of escrow. Staff is continuing to work with Union Pacific Railroad on determining the location of a fiber optics easement which SMART has approved and Union Pacific is currently evaluating. Staff is continuing to work with the proposed buyer by giving them access to property for environmental work.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Staff is continuing to address a variety of requests from adjacent property owners, such as, removal of dead trees, vegetation removal, trash, abandoned vehicles and research of location where telecommunications companies are crossing SMART property

SPECIAL EVENT REQUESTS:

Santa Rosa Wine Country Century Bike Event- May 2, 2020- **Cancelled**

Tour De Cure Bike Event for American Diabetes Association- October 18, 2020- **Cancelled**

Windsor Run & Wine Half Marathon Race – Fit for Equality – May 17, 2020- **Cancelled**

Tour De Fox Bike Ride- Bike Monkey- August 29, 2020- **Cancelled**

RIGHT OF ENTRY PERMITS ISSUED:

Caltrans – Highway 101 Petaluma

City of San Rafael – MUP lighting – San Rafael

PG&E- Silveira Pkwy/Smith Ranch Road San Rafael

PG&E- Gas Line maintenance Town of Windsor, multiple locations

Ghilotti Bros/ County of Sonoma- Repavement of River Road- Fulton

Town of Windsor- Construction and Utility work at Windsor River Road Round-a-bout

Comcast- Overpull new cabling at Merrydale Road to McInnis Parkway- San Rafael

STAFF IS CONTINUING WORKING ON ISSUING RIGHT OF ENTRY PERMITS/LICENSE WITH:

Buckler Family Vineyards LLC – Adobe Road Winery utility connection – Petaluma

County of Marin- Simmons Slough Water Management System

Fredric C. Divine Associates- 826 State Access Road/ 1385 N. Hamilton Pkwy- Novato

PG&E – Gas Line Work – Front Street, Healdsburg

PG&E – New U/G12KV Electric Lines installation- Caulfield Lane/Hopper Street- Petaluma

PG&E – Tree Removal and Vegetation Maintenance, San Rafael

PG&E – Vegetation Maintenance Yearly Renewal Permit- New Process for entire Right of Way

Marin County Flood Control – Installation of 3 pumps – Hwy 37

ATT – 8th Street Crossing Santa Rosa

ATT – 8th Landing Way, Petaluma

West Coast Solar Company – Solar Project – Lagunitas Brewing – Petaluma

Sonic – Numerous Access Permits issued for work on fiber optics lines.

Metro-MCI – request to connect to Sonic fiber line

COMCAST – Staff is still working to finalize outstanding license agreement fees. Fiber Optic installation verifications in 7 locations. Agreements to be revised.

OPERATIONS

MAINTENANCE OF WAY:

- Staff completed fence repairs at 7 locations that had been cut by trespassers.
- Staff began a project to re-stencil the “Stand Back” in white on the red stripes at all station platforms.
- Staff has doubled the rail scrubber schedule due to the current service reductions in order to keep the rail clean.
- Staff completed a cleanup of the yard area at Roblar.
- Two Signal Technicians have completed their qualification testing.
- Staff successfully modified the crossing approach configuration at North McDowell to eliminate electrical interference from overhead power lines in the area.
- Staff was able to utilize available track time on the weekends to complete much needed tree trimming projects at Civic Center, E. Railroad Ave, and Fulton Road. Hazardous branches and limbs overhanging the track were trimmed back.
- SMART flagger at the Petaluma Highway 101 Freeway overhead bridge in Petaluma is now daily.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE:

- Changed out restroom exhaust fan on Diesel Multiple Unit 105.
- Changed out fire suppression purple K bottles on four (4) Diesel Multiple Units. This system is used to suppress a fire in the engine area if one occurs. This work is being performed due to maintenance schedule.
- Performed random emergency window pulls on two (2) different Diesel Multiple Units. This task is performed to ensure gaskets and windows are in compliance and will operate properly in case of an emergency.
- Performed mid-year maintenance on two (2) Diesel Multiple Units.
- Performed 500-hour oil change on (5) Diesel Multiple Units.
- Automatic Train Control maintenance performed on (9) Diesel Multiple Units. This maintenance keeps us compliant with Federal Regulatory Association regulations in regards to positive train control. We also performed an Automatic Train Control maintenance on Northwest Pacific locomotive, NWP 2009.
- Applied COVID-19 signs in all Diesel Multiple Units to ensure passengers are adhering to the Sonoma and Marin county public health directive.

TRANSPORTATION:

- Updating E-Path online training for year 2020.
- Engineer-Conductor training class is being held for two employees.
- SMART’s Engineers-Conductors finished six weeks of the new Revised Train Schedule during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Ridership has decreased due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety has bi-weekly coordination with Metropolitan Transportation Commission and all other Bay Area transit agencies emergency managers. Topics discussed are health orders, trends and best practices for cleaning during the COVID 19 pandemic. SMART continues to be well prepared and have adequate supplies of masks and cleaning products compared to our counterparts. Aggressive, early planning and ordering of supplies has proven to be successful in SMART being a leader in this area.

Marin County Chiefs of Police and Sonoma County Chiefs of Police are in communication several times a week to discuss trending issues surrounding COVID 19. Topics have included enforcement of the health order, messaging to the public and providing support for one another during this pandemic.

Chief McGill participated in Department of Homeland Security call with all Chiefs of police and safety officers from transit agencies across the country. Conversations regarding “the new normal” for transit agencies were discussed from each part of the nation.

SMART has been working with the County of Marin in the planning stages to identify disaster service workers within the agency as well as ways SMART can assist with the pandemic response on a County level.

HUMAN RESOURCES

HIRES:

SMART hired Railroad Information System Specialist - April 2020.

MISCELLANEOUS:

SMART's labor negotiations team will be meeting with our three labor Unions, Operating Engineers Local 3, Teamsters Local 665 and Machinists Lodge 1414 to discuss opportunities for budget savings in the areas of salaries and benefits.

GRANTS, LEGISLATION, PLANNING AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Local Planning Department Notification and Coordination Tracking: SMART Planning Staff also tracks and reviews all notices sent by local jurisdictions for projects occurring adjacent to or nearby the railroad tracks. In 2019 staff received and reviewed 171 different notices, with 43 different notices to date in 2020.

State Route 37 Project: On March 5, 2020 a regular meeting of participating parties (Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), Napa County Transportation and Planning Agency (NCTPA) and Solano Transportation Authority (STA)) to discuss FASTER Bay Area, State Route 37 toll legislation (SB1408) and a Plan Bay Area 2050 update.

SYSTEM ACCESS PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Bike Share: The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) and Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) successfully submitted a joint application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to receive a grant to create a bike share system in close proximity to the SMART stations. After receiving multiple request for proposal responses and interviewing the top three ranked firms, SCTA and TAM entered into negotiations with the top ranked vendor, Gotcha Mobility, and selected them to operate the Bike Share Pilot Program. The pilot program will roll-out 300 GPS-enabled electric bicycles for three years centered around SMART stations. The Bicycle Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is comprised of representatives from each jurisdiction along the SMART line, met remotely on Wednesday April 22, 2020. SMART will continue to work closely with the TAC, TAM, SCTA and Gotcha Mobility in implementing this new first/last mile connection to and from SMART stations.

Clipper START Program: In 2015, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) launched a study to determine if a transit fare program based on household income would be feasible and effective. SMART has been participating in the MTC-hosted Clipper START Program, with monthly meetings and a recent launch of a Clipper-based means-based fare pilot program on selected regional transit operators, which include BART, SFMTA, Caltrain & Golden Gate Bus & Ferry. At the February 5, 2020 meeting, your Board unanimously approved Resolution Number 2020-05 which authorized SMART's formal request to participate in the regional Clipper START Low Income Fare Program. Staff participated in the most recent technical advisory meeting, which was held on April 14, 2020.

MTC has not recommended funding from the Low Carbon Transit Operating Program (LCTOP) funds to pay for the necessary software and hardware programming to allow SMART to participate in the Clipper START Program. No formal response has been received from MTC regarding the SMART Board request to become a participating agency in the Clipper START Program.

Transit Coordination Meetings:

- April 1, 2020 - Staff attended the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) monthly **Transit Finance Working Group** meeting. The seven substantive agenda items included funding and legislative items, including the Federal CARES Act funding supporting transit agencies through the initial COVID-19 impacts.
- April 8, 2020 – Sonoma County Transportation Authority’s **Transit Technical Advisory Committee** meeting. The four substantive agenda items included funding and Measure M reauthorization, as well as COVID-19 impacts and activities.
- **COVID-19 Transit Coordination Phone Calls** – Staff is calling into biweekly phone meetings with Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa City Bus, Petaluma Transit, and Golden Gate Transit to discuss how transit services are being affected by COVID-19.

GRANT ACTIVITIES

Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities: The State of California has created the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program with the fifth cycle of programming underway for \$550 million available statewide. SMART submitted as a joint applicant with MidPen Housing and the City of Santa Rosa for the Roseland Village Project, to construct 75 affordable housing units and a series of transportation investments. If successful, SMART and the City of Santa Rosa would receive resources to complete the SMART Pathway from Joe Rodota Trail across 3rd Street, connecting to the Downtown Santa Rosa Station. SMART would also receive necessary funding towards the completion of the Windsor extension project. The State will conduct technical reviews in April and announce awards June 25, 2020.

Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program: For the 2020 TIRCP grant cycle SMART submitted a request for \$20.9 million of TIRCP funds for the Russian River Bridge Rehabilitation and Healdsburg Station project. On April 21, 2020, the TIRCP awards were announced and SMART was not selected to receive a grant. Nearby awardees included: San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), Solano Transportation Authority, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA), Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and Lake Transit Authority (Lake County).

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act: The Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provides funding to public transit agencies to support operations retroactive to January 20, 2020. SMART will receive a first grant totaling \$10,375,471 from the Federal Transit Administration, as concurred to by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. A subsequent programming of CARES Act funding of a yet undetermined amount will be programmed later in 2020.