

Eric Lucan, Chair
Marin County Board of Supervisors

Melanie Bagby, Vice Chair
Sonoma County Mayors' and
Councilmembers Association

Kate Colin
Transportation Authority of Marin

Chris Coursey
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Rachel Farac
Transportation Authority of Marin

Debora Fudge
Sonoma County Mayors' and
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Patty Garbarino
Golden Gate Bridge,
Highway/Transportation District

Barbara Pahre
Golden Gate Bridge,
Highway/Transportation District

Gabe Paulson
Marin County Council of Mayors and
Councilmembers

David Rabbitt
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

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September 21, 2023

Via email:

departmentb@marin.courts.ca.gov
grandjury@marincounty.org

The Honorable Judge James T. Chou
Marin County Superior Court
PO Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913

Pat Shepherd, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 275
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Responses to Marin County Civil Grand Jury

Honorable Judge James T. Chou and Foreperson Pat Shepherd,

Enclosed please find responses to findings and recommendation from
Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: "**SMART at a Crossroads – Here
Today, Gone Tomorrow?**", dated June 22, 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leticia Rosas".

Leticia Rosas
Clerk of the Board

LRosas@SonomaMarinTrain.org



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September 20, 2023

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Pat Shepherd, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Honorable Judge James T. Chou and Foreperson Pat Shepherd,

RE: Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District's Response to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: "**SMART at a Crossroads - Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?**" - Findings F1-F6 and Recommendations R1 - R3

This letter constitutes Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District Board of Director's response to the above referenced report contained within the 2022 - 2023 Marin County Civil Grand Jury's Reports.

FINDINGS:

F1. SMART is heavily dependent on revenue from voter approved Marin and Sonoma County sales taxes for funding its operations.

Response: SMART Board agrees with the finding.

F2. SMART has never attained the ridership levels that it promised in 2008.

Response: SMART Board agrees with the finding.

F3. SMART's *past* inability to be open and transparent about decision making and operations contributed to the erosion of public confidence leading to the defeat of the Measure I sales tax extension in 2020.

Response: SMART Board agrees with the finding.

F4. SMART will likely be forced to discontinue services if Marin and Sonoma County voters do not approve a sales tax extension by the required supermajority in an election before 2029.

Response: SMART Board agrees with the finding.

F5. SMART's new leadership, especially its General Manager and Chief Financial Officer, appear qualified, energetic, and motivated to take on the many challenges that SMART is facing.

Response: SMART Board agrees with the finding.

F6. SMART does not have a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy.

Response: SMART Board agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. By December 1, 2023, the Board of Directors should initiate a fully transparent, public process to be completed by April 1, 2024, that examines how SMART might continue funding its operations beyond April 2029, including an evaluation of when the voters would decide whether to continue levying a sales tax for SMART's operations.

Response: Recommendation R2 has not been implemented but will be implemented no later than April 1, 2024. The SMART Board of Directors will initiate the process by December 1, 2023, and complete the evaluation by April 1, 2024.

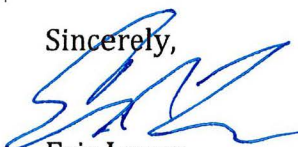
R2. By December 1, 2023, SMART's Board of Directors should direct staff to develop a written strategic marketing communications and public outreach plan and budget focused on educating voters in Marin County about the community benefits derived from the continued operation of the SMART rail system.

Response: Recommendation R2 has not been implemented but will be implemented no later than December 1, 2023.

R3. SMART's Board of Directors should consider hiring consultants to help evaluate the feasibility and timing of future tax measures.

Response: Recommendation R3 has not been implemented but will be implemented no later than December 1, 2023.

Sincerely,



Eric Lucan

Chair of SMART Board of Directors