

CITY OF



*San Rafael*

Agenda Item No: 3\_

Meeting Date: May 3, 2010

**SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

**Department: Community Development Department**

**Prepared by: Bob Brown (LJ) /s/ BB**

**City Manager Approval: /s/ KN**

**SUBJECT:** Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Funding Agreement to Accept and Expend a Grant in the Amount of \$528,000 from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for Station Area Plans for the Downtown San Rafael and the Civic Center rail stations. (P09-005) (CD)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement.

**BACKGROUND:** With the passage of funding for the SMART trains, City staff have been preparing for the integration of the two new rail stations into the community. While SMART staff has begun the work of engineering and design of the rail lines and transit stations, City staff has been attentive to traffic and parking issues, neighbor concerns, and opportunities the train stations offer the community.

*General Plan 2020* includes a number of policies and programs related to San Rafael's new SMART stations (Exhibit 1), supporting development of the stations as multimodal transit hubs, with transit connections, bicycle and pedestrian access, housing and minimized impacts to roadway traffic.

In fall 2009, City staff and staff from other agencies met to prepare and submit a Station Area Plan grant application to the Metropolitan Commission (MTC). The grant program is described at [http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart\\_growth/](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/):

... future transit extensions in the Bay Area must be matched by supportive local land use plans and policies. To assist cities in meeting these goals, MTC has launched a Station Area Planning grant program to fund city-sponsored planning efforts for the areas around future stations. These station-area plans are intended to address the range of transit-supportive features that are necessary to support high levels of transit ridership.

...MTC developed a Station Area Planning Manual (PDF) for use by local jurisdictions applying for planning grant funds from MTC. The manual highlights essential planning elements as well as the variety of placetypes which jurisdictions can plan for, from Regional city centers to transit neighborhoods — and everywhere in between.

The other agencies that are partners in the grant project are the San Rafael Redevelopment Agency, SMART, Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District, Marin Transit, Transportation Authority of Marin, and, for the Civic Center station, Marin County. The grant application process provided the impetus for bringing seven agencies together to begin discussions of the intricate and iterative planning that is required for a smooth inauguration of rail service in San Rafael.

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**FOR CITY CLERK ONLY**

**File No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Council Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition:** \_\_\_\_\_

## SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT / Page: 2

In winter 2010, the City was awarded a \$528,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to prepare Station Area Plans for San Rafael's two new rail stations. The plans will primarily be about ensuring safe access, as well as expanding transit opportunities and ridership. In addition, the plans will study ways to help meet the housing needs of San Rafael, and to build San Rafael's economic vitality. Both plans will use as a basis San Rafael's general plan 2020 land uses and zoning that are already in place. The Funding Agreement and the scope of work for the plans is attached.

The Downtown San Rafael Station Area Plan will be funded with \$388,000 from the MTC grant and a 20% match for a total project cost of \$485,000. The Downtown plan's focus will be primarily on connectivity, access and safety for all users and modes in this intricate congested area. In addition, the plan will look at ways to leverage desired lands uses for the benefit of Downtown, the feasibility of specific housing opportunity sites in the vicinity of the station, and parking demand for existing and future commercial and residential development in the area.

The Civic Center Station Area Plan will be funded with \$140,000 from the MTC grant and a 20% match for a total project cost of \$170,000. The plan's focus will be primarily on connectivity to the Civic Center, the promenade, and the North San Rafael Town Center; opportunities on sites next to and near the train station for their potential for housing (due to ongoing County planning for the Civic Center complex, this plan will not be considering housing opportunities at the Civic Center); and, potential additional parking locations, in addition to SMART's already-planned 130 spaces.

There may be some zoning changes if the plans recommend them as part of the implementation strategy. Several layers of coordination and oversight are proposed as part of the Station Area Plan projects:

- A Steering Committee of representatives from the seven contributing agencies oversee the planning efforts, and provide feedback and direction as needed. City Manager Ken Nordhoff and Mayor Al Boro represent San Rafael on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee meets bi-month as needed.
- A Joint Project Team (JPT) serves as the technical advisory committee, with staff from the seven contributing agencies. Deputy City Manager Nancy Mackle, Assistant Public Works Director Nader Mansourian, Economic Development Coordinator Stephanie Lovette, and Parking Manager Vince Guarino represent San Rafael, as well as project manager Linda Jackson and consultant Rob Bernstein. The Joint Project Team meets monthly as needed.
- A Technical Subcommittee of City staff, including those on the Joint Project Team meets on an as-needed basis to prepare materials for the JPT meetings.

As a City that practices community-based governance, community involvement will be an integral part of the planning process. For the Downtown Plan, two public workshops will be held to solicit issues and ideas and for feedback on the draft plan. In addition, the Redevelopment Citizens' Advisory Committee will provide regular feedback on the process and work of the JPT, and staff will hold loop out meetings on request with interested groups. For the Civic Center Plan, two similar public workshops will also be held. In addition, because of the additional attention on transit oriented development and housing sites on the west side of Highway 101, there will be an Advisory Committee formed to help prepare the plan's land use recommendations.

The Civic Center Station Advisory Committee will comprise approximately 11 members, not including two ex officio non-voting City Council and Planning Commission representatives. The Charge to the Committee is to:

- Prepare a Civic Center Station Plan that will address Station Access and Connectivity; Transit Oriented Development; Accessible Design; Parking; and Pedestrian Design.
- Use area resources and assets to build on the design and engineering work for SMART's Civic Center station to create a functional and attractive transit hub for the north San Rafael community.
- Include a multiagency implementation plan that summarizes the plan's recommendations and includes a phasing plan for actions and financing options for the responsible agencies.

To ensure the broadest representation possible, the SAC members will include people who 1) live or own property or a business in the area, 2) are active in neighborhood, business, faith, civic, environmental and

similar organizations, and 3) represent the various populations of the area, including typically under-represented populations, such as low income renters, people of color, and young adults. Applications to apply to serve on the Advisory Committee will be widely distributed this spring. The Council's Subcommittee on SMART (see below) will review the applications, hold interviews as needed, and make a recommendation on appointments to the City Council. The Committee will begin meeting summer 2010.

Given the iterative and complicated nature of planning for new rail service in San Rafael, it is important to note the distinction between SMART's planning work and the City's planning work. SMART staff is working on topics directly related to the implementation of commuter rail service in the North Bay: rail alignment, vehicle purchase, station location and design, etc. San Rafael's planning projects for the Station Area Plans will be on topics related to the areas outside of SMART's direct control: pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, housing and economic development opportunities, etc.

In addition to the committees noted above for the station area planning project, three other groups provide input and/or oversight on the work of bringing the train to San Rafael:

- SMART's Technical Advisory Committee(TAC). The TAC consists of representatives from cities, towns, counties and the Sonoma and Marin County bicycle coalitions. The TAC has the purpose of providing guidance on a wide range of issues, including road crossings, pathway alignment, public-transit interfaces and other issues related to the design of the SMART rail line. Assistant Public Works Director Nader Mansorian represents the City on this committee managed by SMART staff.
- San Rafael City Council Subcommittee on SMART. Mayor Al Boro and Councilmember Greg Brockbank are on the Council's subcommittee for SMART issues. Periodically, the subcommittee meets to review with staff topics such as Andersen Drive, quiet zones, and station design issues. The subcommittee will review the applications for the Civic Center Station Advisory Committee, and make a recommendation to Council for appointment.
- City SMART Team. This is an ad hoc group led by Deputy City Manager Nancy Mackle to provide staff support to the Council's Subcommittee on SMART.

In addition to appointing the Advisory Committee, the City Council will approve the consultant(s) for the station area plans. With approval of the execution of the Funding Agreement with MTC, staff will issue a Request for Proposal for a consultant for the project.

Staff has an email notification list of approximately 30 people who interested in the SMART stations; they were sent a notice of the Funding Agreement agenda item.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The Downtown project total cost is \$488,000; the Civic Center project total cost is \$175,000. The project includes a total 20% match from the City and partner agencies who are realizing this opportunity to leverage their funds for additional planning monies.

	<b>Downtown Plan</b>	<b>Civic Center Plan</b>	<b>Total Match/Agency</b>
City of San Rafael	\$1,000	\$8,000	\$9,000
Redevelopment Agency	0	\$5,000	\$5,000
SMART	\$41,000	\$6,000	\$47,000
GGBTD	\$33,000	0	\$33,000
Marin Transit	\$20,000	0	\$20,000
TAM	\$2,000	\$8,000	\$10,000
Marin County	0	\$8,000	\$8,000
<b>Total Match/Plan</b>	<b>\$97,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$132,000</b>

The City funds will come from the forthcoming stimulus funds of an Energy and Environmental block grant. Principal Planner Linda Jackson will provide in-kind project management support, with other planning assistance as needed from Community Development staff. A project coordinator (a Redevelopment Agency intern and pending graduate of Mills College's Public Policy Program) will be hired using grant funds. In addition, consultant Robert Bernstein, whose contract was approved by Council on April 19, will assist Public Works staff on this project. The grant will provide a \$20,000 contribution toward his total consultant cost.

**OPTIONS:**      Approve resolution, and approve receipt of the grant  
                    Do not approve the resolution, and deny receipt of the grant

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Adopt Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a funding agreement to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$528,000 from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for Station Area Plans for the new Downtown and Civic Center rail stations.

Exhibit 1            General Plan 2020 Policies and Programs re. SMART Stations  
Exhibit 2            Resolution & Funding Agreement

**EXHIBIT 1**

***GENERAL PLAN 2020 POLICIES AND PROGRAMS RE. SMART STATIONS***

**NH-88. Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) Station.**

If rail service is initiated, support construction of a Civic Center SMART station. Encourage a plan that provides high density housing, bus transit connections, a parking lot, and incorporates pedestrian facilities and bicycle access (including bike storage facilities) consistent with the San Rafael Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

**NH-88a. Transit-Oriented Development.** Work with SMART, Marin County, Golden Gate Bridge Transit District and other transit providers to prepare a site-specific design for a transit-oriented development with housing in the vicinity of the rail station.

**NH-88b. Safe Walkways and Bikeways.** Encourage the provision of lighting and sidewalks to ensure safe and attractive walkways and bikeways from the transit center, on both sides of Civic Center Drive, to the Northgate area.

**NH-36. Hetherton Office District. . . .**

b. **Transportation Hub.** Use the Transportation Center to coordinate and facilitate the different ways people move to and around Downtown, including bus, rail, auto, bicycle and on foot. Include safe pedestrian and bicycle connections linking this area to the stores, services, cultural facilities, and recreational opportunities in other parts of Downtown. Expand connections from the Transportation Center to other parts of the City by:

- Encouraging expanded bus transit,
- Considering shuttle service to feasible locales when such service is warranted and can be funded,
- Incorporating a rail station if rail service is initiated,
- Improving walking and biking facilities,
- Providing a safe connection to Mahon Path,
- Facilitating the movement of commuters to and from the neighborhoods, and
- Creating safer pedestrian crossings on Second and Third Streets.

**NH-36a. Zoning Ordinance.** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow more flexibility in uses in Hetherton Office zoning district.

**NH-36b. Transit Service.** Support efforts by Caltrans, the Golden Gate Bridge District, the Marin County Transit District and other transportation providers to increase transit service at the Transportation Center.

b. **Fourth and Hetherton.** Announce and mark this primary gateway to Downtown with a distinctive gateway treatment at Fourth Street and Hetherton, which is gracious and welcoming in character. Design issues to consider are:

- Plaza or other open space areas both public and private,
- Public art,
- Strong landscaping design, and
- Retail uses opening on to a plaza or other open space areas.

**NH-148. Residential Use at the End of Merrydale Road.**

Evaluate amending the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to promote residential uses at the end of Merrydale Road.

**NH-148a. Zoning Change.** Consider amending the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow housing at the end of Merrydale Road.

**C-17. Regional Transit Options.**

Encourage expansion of existing regional transit connecting Marin with adjacent counties, including basic service, express bus service, new commuter rail service, and ferry service.

**Regional Bus Service.** Encourage expansion of regional bus service to and from Sonoma, San Francisco, Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. Support efforts to increase the frequency of service, and expand express bus service along the 101 corridor to connect with major employers. The Bettini Transportation Center is a multimodal transit hub with services connecting San Rafael to San Francisco, the East Bay, and the North Bay.

**Commuter Rail:** Encourage development and use of a viable commuter rail service through San Rafael operating on the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) right-of-way. Though SMART service will

initially have its southern termination point Downtown, encourage efforts to ultimately connect it with ferry service to San Francisco.

**C-17a. SMART.** Should voters approve funding of SMART commuter service, support the following design features within San Rafael:

1. Establish stations in Downtown and in the Civic Center that will serve as multi-modal commuter transit hubs.
2. Design stations and rail crossings safe for pedestrians and with minimal impacts on roadway traffic.
3. Support crossings at-grade through Downtown and strongly advocate for trains that are of a length that they avoid blocking traffic at an intersection.
4. Ensure that new development adjacent to the rail line is set back a safe distance and adequately attenuates noise.
5. Encourage high-density transit-oriented development in the vicinity of the rail stations.
6. Include noise mitigation as described in policy N-9 (Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit).
7. Provide a north/south bike/pedestrian path on or adjacent to the railroad right-of-way.

**C-18. Local Transit Options.**

Support improvement and expansion of local transit options including local bus, shuttle and taxi services.

- a. **Local Bus Service.** Support efforts to improve bus routing, frequency and stop amenities to meet local needs.
- b **Local Shuttles.** Support efforts to create shuttle services as they become feasible to serve specialized populations and areas of San Rafael. If rail service is developed, support shuttle service connections between rail stations and major employers.
- c. **Other Local Transit.** Support Dial-A-Ride and taxi services serving San Rafael.

**C-18b. Local Shuttle Program.** Should there be an increase in density in a potential service area or implementation of the SMART rail line, and if funding becomes available, investigate the feasibility of a local shuttle program to serve San Rafael.

**C-20. Intermodal Transit Hubs.**

Support efforts to develop intermodal transit hubs in Downtown and at the Civic Center to provide convenient and safe connections and support for bus, rail, shuttle, bicycle, and pedestrian users, as well as automobile drivers using transit services. Hubs should include secure bicycle parking and efficient drop-off and pick-up areas without adversely affecting surrounding traffic flow.

**C-20a. Transit Hubs.** Work with Marin County, the Marin County Transit District, SMART Commission, the Golden Gate Bridge Transportation District, and other regional agencies to ensure that intermodal transit hubs are designed to be convenient and safe for San Rafael users.

