



## **SMART's White Papers**

Following the razor-thin defeat of its ballot measure in November 2006, the Sonoma-Marín Rail Transit District's Board of Directors convened an Ad-Hoc Committee to meet with community groups and local government officials, as well as supporters and opponents of the passenger rail and trail project. The goal of the committee was to gather input from all quarters regarding the public's perception of the project – both positive and negative.

The overwhelming message was that SMART was on the right track. The measure to raise the sales tax by one-quarter of one percent to pay for the project earned 65.3 percent of the vote in Marin and Sonoma counties – just 1.4 percent short of the required two-thirds super-majority.

Still, the committee was told there are things SMART could do better, such as: Add weekend service, consider lighter-weight self-propelled rail cars and complete critical links in the project's adjacent 70-mile pedestrian-bicycle path. Those elements and others are undergoing environmental review as SMART moves toward returning to the ballot in November 2008.

In addition to these changes, the SMART Ad-Hoc advisers repeatedly emphasized that SMART needs to do a better job of keeping the public informed and updated on the project. It's a good project, they said. But some people don't understand it. They need a better explanation of what it will do, and what it cannot do.

In an effort to correct misunderstandings and overcome some of the confusion that was spread during the 2006 campaign, the Ad-Hoc Committee recommended that SMART prepare a series of white papers, or fact sheets, regarding various components of the project. More accessible and less technical than SMART's thorough environmental documents, these papers are meant to educate the public on the benefits of SMART and explain why the project is the best use of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way through Marin and Sonoma counties.

These papers are based on SMART previous planning documents, environmental studies and expenditure plans, all of which are public documents. They also include information gleaned from research by SMART staff and advice from SMART consultants and advisers. Because certain elements of the SMART project may change before a measure is placed on the ballot in late 2008, some information in the individual papers also may be subject to change.

*For more information about the SMART rail and trail project, go to [www.sonomamarintrain.org](http://www.sonomamarintrain.org) or call SMART's information lines in Marin, 415-419-3510, or Sonoma, 707-583-2323.*