



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 3/3/2026

To: Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County

Department or Agency Name(s): County Counsel

Staff Name and Phone Number: Joshua Myers, County Counsel; Petra Bruggisser, Chief Deputy County Counsel, (707) 565 2421

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

The SMART Initiative: Safe, Modern and Accessible Rail and Transit

Recommended Action:

Provide comment and take a formal position on the proposed "SMART Initiative: Safe, Modern and Accessible Rail and Transit"; and authorize the Board of the Chair to send a letter in support of, or opposition to, the Initiative.

Executive Summary:

On January 21, 2026, the Board of Directors of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District (SMART) accepted the certifications of the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters that "The SMART Initiative: Safe, Modern, and Accessible Rail and Transit" (SMART Initiative), an elector-proposed initiative petition, contains sufficient signatures to qualify for the ballot.

The SMART Board requested the Boards of Supervisors of the Counties of Sonoma and Marin to call a special election on the SMART Initiative in their respective Counties to be held on June 2, 2026, and to consolidate the special election with the Statewide Direct Primary Election held on the same date. That request is presented to the Board of Supervisors in a separate agenda item concurrently with this item.

This item provides the opportunity to the Board to comment and take a formal position on the SMART Initiative.

Discussion:

On August 25, 2025, proponents of "The SMART Initiative: Safe, Modern and Accessible Rail and Transit" filed with the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters Office (ROV) a notice of intention to circulate an initiative petition to extend the existing quarter-cent, voter approved, sales tax for 30 years, generating approximately \$51,000,000 annually beginning in 2029.

According to the proponents, the intent of the SMART Initiative is, without raising taxes, to (1) continue providing a clean and safe regional rail and pathway system and offer accessible, convenient, and affordable transportation for all including seniors, students, essential workers, and low-income households; (2) leverage local funding to secure federal, state, regional, and local grants; (3) complete planned rail and pathway expansion and continue extending the rail and pathway system while working toward corridor preservation and project development of East/West rail alignment; (4) continue to build upon record ridership and pathway use by serving millions of rail and pathway trips annually; (5) relieve traffic congestion, improve travel time and reliability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide an alternative to sitting in traffic while effectively decreasing vehicle miles traveled and transportation emissions; (6) maintain and modernize SMART's infrastructure to ensure the system remains safe and serviceable and meets the needs of the community; (7) provide accountability and protect taxpayers with strict accountability measures through a Citizen's Oversight Committee and independent audits, to protect the public's investments and ensure funds are spent as intended by voters; and (8) guarantee that the measure's funding goes directly to Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District's priorities.

If approved by the voters, the quarter-cent sales tax is estimated to provide \$51,000,000 annually, beginning in 2029, and would be subject to independent audits and review by a citizen's oversight committee.

The petitions regarding the SMART Initiative were accepted for filing and submitted for signature verification by the Registrars of Voters on November 21, 2025.

On December 18, 2025, after careful examination of the signatures, the Registrar of Voters notified SMART that the number of signatures required to place the SMART Initiative on the ballot was sufficient.

The SMART Board accepted the certificate of sufficiency and, on January 21, 2026, adopted a Resolution to request the Boards of Supervisors of the Counties of Sonoma and Marin to call a special election on the SMART Initiative in their respective Counties to be held on June 2, 2026, and to consolidate the special election with the Statewide Direct Primary Election held on the same date. That request is presented to the Board in a separate agenda item concurrently with this item.

This item provides an opportunity to comment and take a formal position on the proposed SMART Initiative, and to authorize the Board of the Chair to send a letter in support of, or opposition to, the SMART Initiative. If the Board chooses to take a formal position on the proposed SMART Initiative, County Executive staff will prepare a letter for the Board Chair's signature.

Racial Equity:

N/A

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Agenda Date: 3/3/2026

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Attachments:

None.

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

March 3 2026, Sonoma County Board of Supervisor Resolution to call a special election on the SMART Initiative to be held on June 2, 2026, and to consolidate the special election with the Statewide Direct Primary Election held on the same date.