

SMART Board of Director Meeting

Agenda Item 9 – SMART's Quality of Life Study

July 16, 2025



SMART **Quality of Life** **& Economic** **Impact Study**

SMART District Board of Directors
July 16, 2025



Study Purpose

The data and information gathered from this study will be used to:

1

Monitor SMART's progress and impact

2

Guide future decision-making to maximize the benefits of the investments in this critical, multimodal asset in Sonoma and Marin

3

Support SMART's community engagement with all stakeholders in Marin and Sonoma

4

Inform SMART's regional, state and federal funding partners

Timeline

2023

March

**Applied for
Planning
Grant**

August

**Grant
Awarded**

2024

February

**Executed
Grant
Agreement**

June

**Awarded
Contract**

July

**Study
Kick-off**

Fall

**Outreach
Round 1**

2025

Spring/Early Summer

**Outreach
Round 2**


July

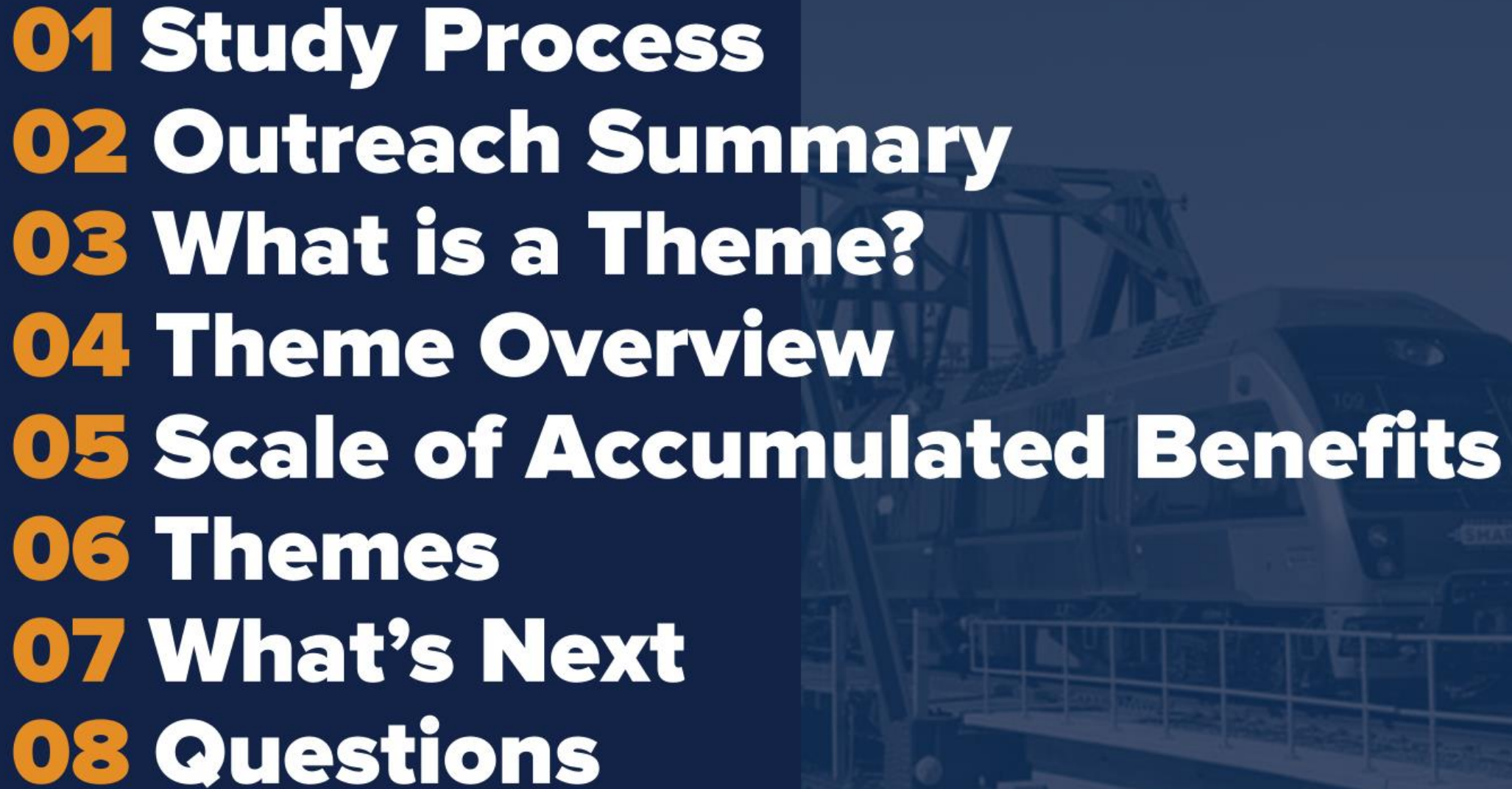
Today!

Study Overview

The Quality of Life & Economic Impact Study will examine the role of SMART's rail and pathway construction and operation in driving outcomes for key quality of life indicators including:

-  **mobility**
-  **economics**
-  **land use**
-  **environment**

-  **public health**
-  **safety**
-  **access to opportunity**
-  **equity**

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- The background of the slide features a high-speed train, possibly a Shinkansen, crossing a large steel truss bridge. The train is white with blue accents and is moving towards the right. The bridge has a complex network of steel beams and supports. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter. On the left side of the slide, there is a solid dark blue vertical bar that serves as a background for the text.
- 01 Study Process**
 - 02 Outreach Summary**
 - 03 What is a Theme?**
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 - 06 Themes**
 - 07 What's Next**
 - 08 Questions**

Study Process



Outreach Summary



Blue Ribbon Panel

Team of subject-matter experts to vet key analyses and themes

Transit

Air Quality

Active Transportation

Economic Analysis

Engagement

Environment



Community Stakeholders

Community stakeholders serving, or representing populations of the North Bay engaged through listening sessions

CBOs

Advocacy Groups

Business Organizations

Educational Institutions

Housing and
Community Services



Technical Advisory Committee

Regional and local agencies provide feedback, data resources, and guidance

Dept of Public Health

Economic Development

Workforce Development

Transportation Authorities

Local Jurisdictions



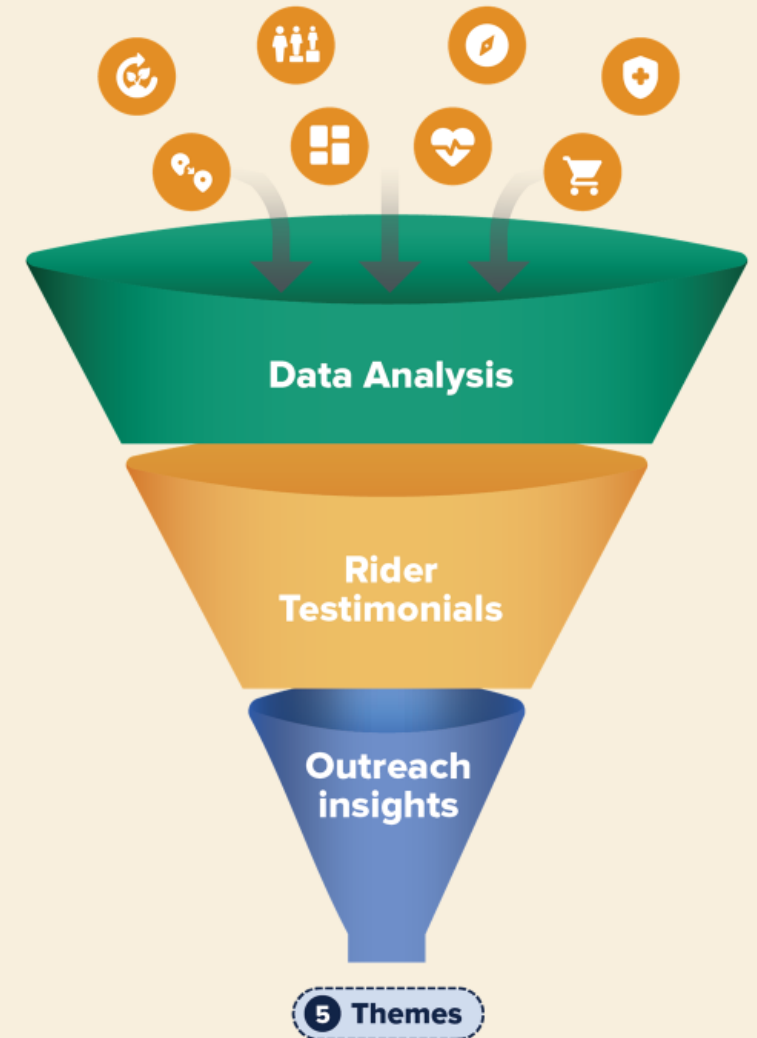
Rider Testimonials

Rider-submitted stories and experiences about SMART

General Public

What constitutes a theme?

The following themes synthesize findings from quantitative **data analysis**, **rider testimonials**, and insights from the **outreach** process. Together, these inputs illustrate the impacts of the SMART Rail and Pathway system on the North Bay.



Theme Overview



SMART
**offers a
reliable
and safe
alternative
to congested
roads**



SMART
**supports
livable
communities**



SMART
**strengthens
the local
economy**



SMART
**keeps the
North Bay
moving in
sustainable
and healthy
ways**

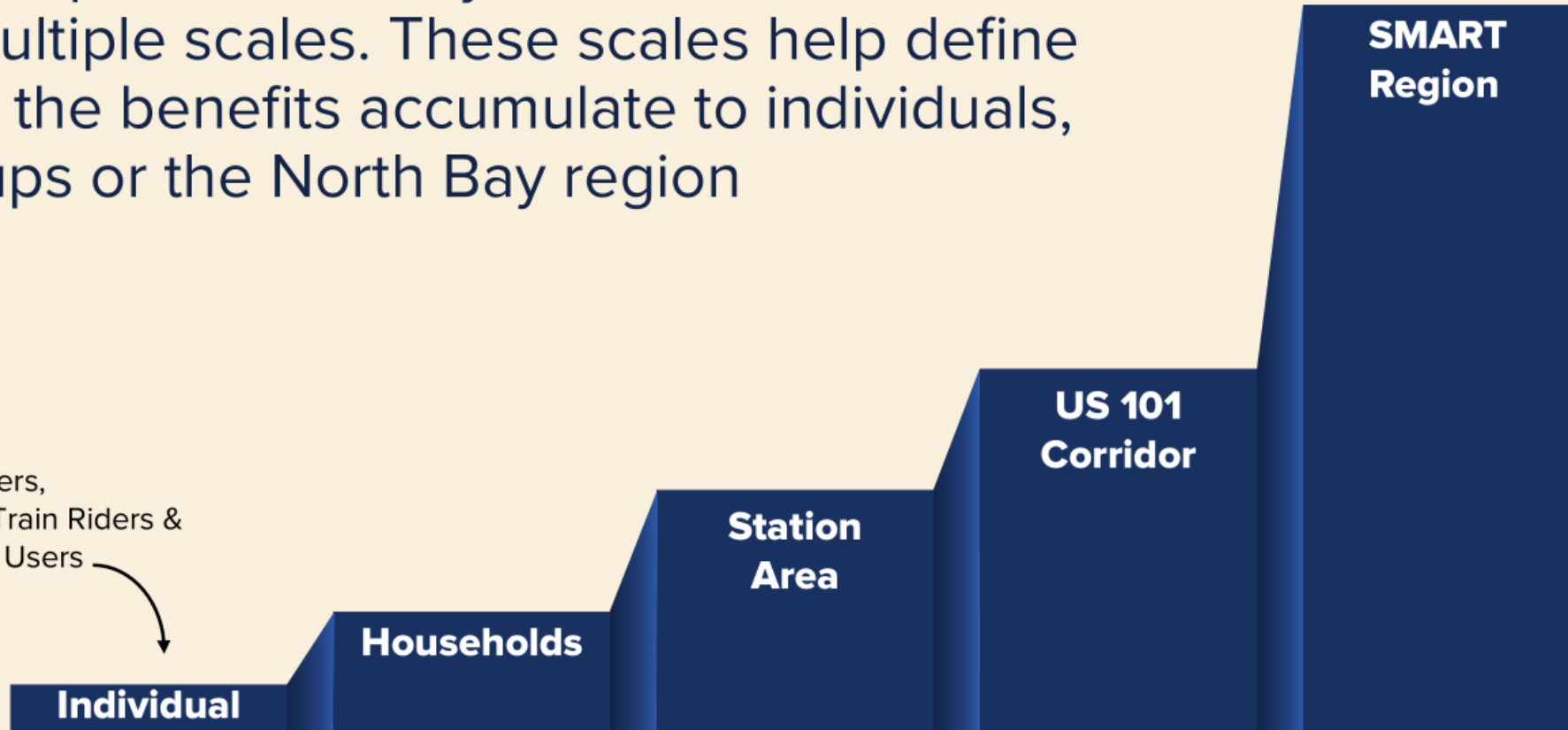


SMART
**transforms
communities,
not just
commutes**

Scale of Accumulated Benefits

The impacts the study measure are assessed at multiple scales. These scales help define how the benefits accumulate to individuals, groups or the North Bay region

Commuters,
SMART Train Riders &
Pathway Users



SMART offers a reliable
and safe alternative to
congested roads

You can count on SMART to be on time

98% On Time Performance

With 98% on-time performance, SMART provides riders with something the freeway can't: reliability

22 min of delay on the highway

Drivers on **US 101** can expect up to 22 minutes of delay when heading south during peak morning commute times



If SMART riders instead traveled by car, over **920,000 additional vehicle trips would be added to the region's roadways**, that would further worsen roadway congestion and delays

You can count on SMART to be safe

83% of SMART's riders feel safe on transit

When asked how safe they feel riding public transit, **SMART survey respondents** overwhelming reported feeling very safe and safe using transit in the Bay Area

1.7 highway collisions/day

There are more than 1.7 collisions a day on **US 101**, over 600 crashes a year

\$63 million in highway collision costs

In total collisions occurring on **US 101** have cost \$63 million since 2018

“Riding SMART has changed my life! I commute from Cotati to Larkspur Monday- Friday and every time I get on the train, I feel so at peace and safe.”

SMART supports
livable communities

SMART allows for independence

Growing youth and senior ridership

In just one year, youth ridership more than doubled (a 130% increase), while senior ridership grew by 71%

34% without a household car

34% of SMART riders reported not having a household car available for their trip

5% with travel-limiting disability

5% reported having a disability that limits their ability to travel

SMART makes getting around affordable

8x cheaper than driving

When including the fixed and variable costs associated with owning a vehicle, a car trip from San Rafael to Santa Rosa is nearly eight times more expensive than the average SMART fare

Over 31% earn under \$60,000

Over 31% of SMART riders have a household income of \$60,000 or below, which is below the statewide median household income in California

Links 5,500 affordable homes

There are 5,500 income-restricted units within a mile of a SMART station, linking affordable housing with a complementary affordable transportation option

SMART unlocks more housing options

\$97 million in AHSC Grant Funding

Since 2017, SMART has helped communities win over \$97 million in Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grants

Transit-Supportive Development

By channeling growth to established corridors, SMART helps limit pressure on rural and agricultural lands and reduces the likelihood of sprawl

“

SMART saves me a ton of money and aggravation. I would not be able to afford rent and other necessities were it not for the train”

SMART strengthens
the local economy

SMART strengthens North Bay integration

71 % of key destinations accessible

SMART functions as the backbone of the North Bay's transit system, with local transit connections at each station, 71% of key destinations can be accessed within an hour on transit

Fosters workforce mobility

49% of trips on SMART are commute trips; allowing workers to access a wide range of job opportunities, and employers to benefit from a larger pool of talent from within and between the counties

Supports intraregional mobility and long - distance travel

SMART train riders typically travel longer distances (21 miles on average). SMART station areas have strong travel markets for long-distance trips occurring within and between counties

SMART enables local benefits for local people

Improves mobility and access

Stations make up just 4% of the land area in the two counties, they account for over 30% of the region's total population and jobs

Supports small businesses and local tourism

Non-work trips – such as shopping, dining, and recreation – make up half of SMART ridership. These trips support small businesses, drive tourism, and keep spending local

Higher investment near stations

In the last five years, average property sales (non-single-family) prices per square foot near SMART stations were 700% higher and retail sales in the station areas accounted for 41% of taxable sales in the two counties

SMART keeps the
North Bay moving in
sustainable and
healthy ways

SMART is making the North Bay more bikeable and walkable

SMART provides 15% of the protected paths in Sonoma & Marin

Currently, the SMART pathway accounts for 15% of all off-street protected pathways in all of Sonoma and Marin

39 out of 70 planned miles built

SMART and local partners have completed 39 miles of the planned 70-mile pathway

Connects to 30+ miles of trails

Once on the SMART pathway, users can access an additional 30 miles of connected trail systems like the Bay Trail and Cross Marin-and many more with the connection to the Great Redwood Trail

SMART is a sustainable option

SMART serves longer distance trips

With an average one-way trip averages 21 miles on board the train, SMART is well-suited to serve these longer-distance commutes that disproportionately contribute to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the region

Reduced 4,000 tons CO₂ to date

SMART has already prevented nearly 4,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. With the planned extension to Healdsburg and Cloverdale, this number will grow to 131,000 metric tons by the year 2050

\$300 million in avoided climate impacts

Using the social cost of greenhouse gases, that equates to over \$300 million in avoided climate damages

SMART provides an active and healthy alternative

48 daily active minutes by pathway users

Each day, people using the SMART Pathway generate approximately 118,500 minutes of physical activity, averaging 48 active minutes per person

63% increase in usage on the Pathway

From April 2023 to April 2025, monthly active transportation use along the SMART Pathway grew by 63.3%, increasing from approximately 60,000 users to 98,000

Active travel generates health benefits

Active transportation is associated with a 10% reduction in all-cause mortality, a 10% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, and a 30% reduction in type 2 diabetes risk

SMART transforms
communities, not just
commutes

SMART's benefits go beyond transportation

\$44 million total annual benefits

SMART's annual spending creates nearly \$44 million of total socioeconomic benefits locally, approximately \$30 million of which is directly attributed to SMART's annual operations spending

\$1.05 total benefit for every dollar

Every dollar SMART spends generates \$1.05 in total local societal benefits when accounting for reduced vehicle operating costs, injuries/fatalities avoided from traffic crashes, reduced emissions, value added for cyclists/health benefits

“

Love SMART.

A. *Ultra Low pollution.*

B. *NO parking hassle.*

C. *Stress free ride.*

D. *Scenic background during the ride”*

SMART brings and retains investment in the North Bay

\$0.74 retained for every dollar

For every dollar SMART spends, \$0.74 is retained in the local economy as payroll, profits, and taxes

\$735 million in outside grant funding

Between 2009 and 2025, SMART has collected \$611 million in sales tax and secured \$735 million in grants. In other words, for every \$1 dollar of sales tax SMART has secured another \$1.20 dollars in outside funding

What's Next?

The next steps for the Project team include:

- 1 Complete and finalize the analysis phase
- 2 Draft study and final study

Questions?

