

Audience questions for Farhad Mansourian

How have you reacted to the LPG tank cars adjacent to the SMART tracks and will Senate Bill 1029 mitigate that?

FM: We worked with the freight operator and they relocated all the full LPG tanks.

Can a project like SMART be implemented without passing the ¼ cent sales tax and would the state give funds to such a project without that sales tax?

FM: In nearly all cases, federal, state and regional grants require a local match. This local match is then used as leverage to attract other grants as well as private funds. This local match can be sales tax, property tax or other dedicated fund for this purpose.

What is the cost of a single train set and what is its capacity?

FM: The cost of a train vehicle is based on two things – the timing of that purchase and the specific requirements that the agency mandates. Our cost in 2010 was \$11M per set of two and it has a sitting & standing capacity of 320 and 24 bicycles.

What is the max capacity of the entire SMART system?

FM: Transit agencies can always increase the capacity by building more infrastructure and more or different types of vehicles.

Can you do this with 30 percent of the population?

FM: I don't have enough information to answer that. Your staff will build based on your needs.

What is the average distance or miles-traveled that a rider travels on SMART?

FM: We are hoping to conduct surveys to get this type of data.

Have the goals for ridership and revenue been either met or exceeded?

FM: In our first year of operation, we have met our financial goal and our ridership goal.

What are the three biggest or most common complaints that SMART receives?

FM:

1. The need for more cars during the morning & afternoon commutes
2. The need for more trips during the evening commute hours
3. The need for earlier trips on weekends

Are there other ways to fund train systems than through sales taxes?

FM: Yes, through property tax or General Fund money.

What is the average SMART ridership per train? Is it about 88 people per train?

FM: We keep track of daily passenger, bicycle and wheelchair counts, not passenger counts by train.

What are the demographics of SMART riders?

FM: That is a good question that we hope to get some information on in our second year.

How would a rail system like SMART, if implemented in Santa Cruz County, create freedom and opportunity for the people who need it most in the region?

FM: A system like SMART will give residents options.

Do you think it is better for an agency to take over the operation of a train system, like SMART has done, or to bring in a rail operator, like the RTC has done?

FM: Both models works. SMART could not consider a public-private partnership because the legislation that created SMART prohibited it for the first four years.

If you were a kid working at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk and lived in Watsonville, would you rather pay a \$2 fare to ride the METRO bus or a higher fare, around \$22, to ride a train?

FM: Where does the \$22 train fare come from? Note that busses, shuttles and automobiles are all on the same roadway that is crawling along. The train has its own right-of-way.