



Published in the Novato Advance
May 17, 2017
Volume 94, Number 20
The Train is a-comin' and here's the scoop

We are getting very close to the launch of SMART passenger service! Testing is going very well and as of May 12th SMART has been testing using its proposed passenger service schedule. This means that SMART is running 30 train trips per day on weekdays and 10 on the weekends. Testing will continue for the next few weeks and then passenger service is right around the corner!

The SMART Train is officially coming to Marin and so are Quiet Zones. On May 10, the San Rafael and the Novato City Councils held a joint workshop to discuss SMART Quiet Zones and the timing of the establishment of the contiguous Quiet Zone for Novato, San Rafael and Marin County. A Quiet Zone is a defined area of track where the horn is not required to sound (except when leaving a station or in an emergency). This joint session followed the City of San Rafael's filing of a Notice of Establishment on April 20. The Quiet Zone can be established no earlier than 21 days after this filing.

Following the joint workshop, the San Rafael City Council (the lead jurisdiction for the Quiet Zone) voted to request approval for the start of the Quiet Zone for San Rafael, Novato, and Marin County as soon as possible. San Rafael staff is contacting the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to request that approval, which could allow the Quiet Zones to "go live" within the week.

This is good news for our local residents who have been concerned about train noise and anxiously awaiting Quiet Zone implementation - but now marks the time that we need to be extra cautious and diligent near all railroad crossings and tracks. As Quiet Zones are established, remember that you may not hear train horns at railroad crossings - but there may be a train coming!

A few very important safety reminders:

- Do not walk on the railroad tracks. Walking on the tracks is unsafe and illegal.
- Drivers should never stop on the railroad tracks and never cross the tracks until you are sure you have enough room to make it safely through to the other side.
- Use designated railroad crossings only. Wait for the bells and flashing lights to stop and for the gate to rise completely before crossing railroad tracks.
- Be prepared to stop at railroad crossings. Slow down and always be alert and aware around all railroad tracks and crossings.

SMART staff has been hard at work developing safety materials, creating interactive safety games, distributing safety materials to school children, as well as making Rail Safety Presentations at our local schools. For more information on rail safety and to download these materials, visit the SMART safety web page at: www.BeTrackSmart.org.

On a very exciting note, I am pleased to share that the Novato Theater will be the beneficiary of a \$250,000 grant from the Buck Family Fund of the Marin Community Foundation. My office worked with the Theater Board on this request to the Marin Community Foundation. This financial boost will go a long way toward the next phase of construction. The next phase includes: framing the interior of the structure; completing rough electrical and plumbing; framing the roof and installing roof trusses; installing roofing and mechanical equipment; and completing the exterior finishes on the frontage of the building.

The Novato Theater has received financial support from both the City of Novato and the County of Marin, along with numerous local businesses and individuals. Fundraising naming opportunities have been a success with the naming rights for the Main Lobby, Beer & Wine Bar, Concession Area, Box Office and the Vintage Ticket Booth already secured (with additional opportunities still available!). Fundraising efforts are ongoing and community members interested in getting involved can contact the Novato Theater at: info@novatotheater.net or www.novatotheater.net.

As always, please contact me if I can be of assistance to you. You can reach me at jarnold@marincounty.org or 415-473-7331.