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For Immediate Release

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SMART receives key environmental approval for bicycle and pedestrian pathway

The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART) received federal environmental clearance today for a 36-mile portion of the bicycle and pedestrian pathway between the San Rafael Civic Center Station and the Santa Rosa North Station as part of a Federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review.

SMART's environmental clearance, which spans two counties, is one of the most significant environmental approvals to advance bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Bay Area. The environmental clearance also makes the approved portion of the bicycle and pedestrian pathway eligible for federal funding.

"This federal clearance is the culmination of years of work and collaboration with several federal agencies," said SMART General Manager Farhad Mansourian. "The clearance also gives us the green light to apply for federal funds to help pay for the pathway, and we have already started that process."

SMART spent the past three years working on the clearance with several federal agencies. Caltrans, which served as the lead agency on behalf of federal environmental officials, led the effort.

"We are very pleased to be part of this process and move a project forward that is in line with our mission of promoting sustainable transportation options in the Bay Area," said Bijan Sartipi, Caltrans District 4 Director.

In addition, SMART worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Fisheries to receive the approval.

The pathway will provide opportunities for viewing some of the area's beautiful wetlands, while making the North Bay more accessible to cyclists and pedestrians. The SMART pathway will link to other bicycle and pedestrian pathways and connect with train stations.

SMART will start construction on multiple sections of the pathway as early as this month and work will continue through 2016. Pathway construction is scheduled for several areas in Sonoma and Marin counties, including:

- North San Pedro Road to Marin Civic Center Station in San Rafael.
- Novato Hamilton Station to Hamilton Parkway; Franklin Avenue to Grant Avenue; and Rush Creek Place to Novato San Marin Station in Novato.
- East Cotati Boulevard to Golf Course Drive in Rohnert Park.
- Bellevue Avenue to Hearn Avenue; 3rd Street to Santa Rosa Downtown Station; 6th Street to 8th Street; and College Ave to Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa.

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