

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED WETLANDS ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE FINDING

The Sonoma- Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District has prepared a Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding pursuant to Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands, for the Non-Motorized Pathway Phase 1 project. The finding is available for viewing at the link below. It is being presented for public review and comment beginning February 13, 2015 and ending March 15, 2015.

**Project Title:** Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit Non-Motorized Pathway Phase 1 Project From McInnis Parkway in San Rafael, California (SMART MP 20.1) to Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa, California (SMART MP 55.3) Federal Aid Project # RPSTPLE 6411 (005)

**Federal Lead Agency:** Caltrans (as delegated by the Federal Highway Administration)

**Local Lead Agency:** Sonoma- Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District

**Project Description:** SMART proposes to construct Phase 1 of a non-motorized pathway (NMP) that would extend from McInnis Parkway in San Rafael, California (Mile Post [MP] 20.1) north to Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa, California (MP 55.3). The portion of the pathway from MP 28.5 to MP 36.8 is already environmentally approved and will be built as part of the Caltrans Marin-Sonoma Narrows Project. The NMP is designed to add non-vehicular transportation options within the U.S. Highway 101 Corridor through Sonoma and Marin Counties. Phase 1 of the NMP is an independent component of the overall SMART District multi-modal transportation program which includes a commuter rail system and NMP from Larkspur to Cloverdale (i.e., the SMART Project).

The SMART Project was evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in a series of Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) and related technical studies (SMART 2006). Federal funding is now being sought (the federal action), therefore Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands applies as part of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. Under NEPA, the project is proposed to be processed as a Categorical Exclusion. Under NEPA assignment from the Federal Highway Administration (MOU, June 7, 2013), Caltrans is the federal lead agency for the SMART NMP Phase 1 project.

There is only one Build Alternative. This includes construction of approximately 23 miles of paved pathway (with two 4 foot wide bicycle/pedestrian lanes and two associated 2-foot gravel shoulders), twelve prefabricated bridges, numerous culverts, safety fences, retaining walls, and other minor project elements such as signage and pavement striping are also part of the project.

Based upon the rationale presented in the Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding Memorandum (available for viewing at the link below), it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the current Build Alternative includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.

**Public Review Process:** The Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding Memorandum will be available for public review and comment beginning February 13, 2015 and ending March 15, 2015. Prior to the end of the review period, commenters should submit comments and/or direct inquiries to one of the following:

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Comments will be reviewed by SMART and Caltrans to further evaluate the merits of the finding. Thank you for your interest in the SMART NMP Phase 1 project.