



For Immediate Release

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SMART San Rafael to Larkspur Segment Accepted into Federal “New Starts” Program

Petaluma, CA – Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) announced today that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has accepted SMART’s San Rafael to Larkspur segment into the Project Development phase of its “Small Starts” funding program. This designation grants SMART funding to complete the federal environmental review process as well as final engineering and design for this critical segment.

“When we started this process some said it couldn’t be done,” noted SMART board chair Judy Arnold. “But here we are, and it’s because every board member representing every community is determined to complete the entire project to both the north and to the south in the shortest time possible. We’re set to work with our other regional partners to get this done.”

The Small Starts designation puts SMART among a small group of projects nationwide that can be considered for federal construction dollars from this program. The consideration process for the Project Development designation is rigorous, evaluating candidate projects’ local and regional financing track record and demonstrated achievement of progress milestones. By accepting the SMART San Rafael to Larkspur project into the Small Starts program, the Federal Transit Administration has acknowledged the national significance of the project.

“We would like to thank our congressional representatives for their steadfast support and for keeping federal focus on this important regional connection,” said general manager Farhad Mansourian.

Mansourian also credits the staff at both the FTA headquarters and regional office as instrumental in navigating the federal funding process. “I spoke with FTA Administrator Rogoff on Monday, who indicated that the progress we have made on the Larkspur Extension warrants a place for the project at the federal table.” Thanks to FTA staff’s expertise and guidance, SMART is entering the Small Starts program with two of the four key milestones for award of construction funding already complete and the third, which is federal environmental clearance, will be done by early 2014.

A key element to secure Small Starts funds for the construction phase is the financial plan for the segment, which also must identify the non-federal dollars to which federal construction dollars can be allocated. A “local” match is required, which can come from

local, regional and/or state funds. Local funding beyond the minimum makes a project more competitive in the federal process.

The SMART train and pathway project is currently under construction and will provide a new regional transportation backbone with improved transit options for all North Bay residents.

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