



**MEMO**

**To:** NCRA Board of Directors  
**From:** Executive Director Mitch Stogner  
**Date:** April 14, 2010  
**Subject:** **Agenda Item F.1 – NCRA/SMART Joint Use of \$10.75 mil. ISTEА Funds**

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Please find attached NCRA's staff response to SMART's March 23 (attached) proposal for use of \$10.75 mil. in ISTEА funds.

We have requested a meeting with SMART staff on April 16 to discuss the differences between the two proposals.

Project Manager, David Anderson, has also drafted a summary (attached) of the differences between the 2 approaches advanced by staff.

This information is provided for information and discussion purposes.

Both the NCRA Board and SMART Board will be required to approve the final scope of work and a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) when an agreement is finalized at the staff level.



**North Coast Railroad Authority**

419 Talmage Road, Suite M

Ukiah, CA 95482

April 2, 2010

Lillian Hames  
Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit  
750 Lindaro Street  
San Rafael, CA 94901-6029

via: email and USPS

Dear Lillian:

Thank you for SMART's proposal regarding the use of \$8.6 million in ISTEA funds designated for NCRA in 1996. As you know, SAFETEUALU also named NCRA as the lead agency for receipt of these funds in 2005.

First, we appreciate the time and effort Erin McGrath and others on your staff have devoted to the development of the proposed scope of work sent to NCRA on March 23. However, NCRA disagrees with SMART's assumption that SMART will not benefit from any repairs east of the Ignacio Wye. As the agency advancing 80% of the money for this proposed work, NCRA feels strongly that targeted safety improvements on the Lombard Branch will benefit both agencies.

Specifically, automation of the Black Point Swing Bridge that crosses the Petaluma River will:

- Provide SMART efficient access to rail-mounted equipment in response to emergencies;
- Give SMART contractors the ability to deliver materials via rail, such as welded rail that cannot be viably shipped by other modes;
- Allow SMART to take delivery of ties, ballast, bridge girders, and other construction materials by rail, which will save time, money and reduce traffic impacts during construction.

Black Point Bridge automation will eliminate the need to navigate the river channel by row boat every time the bridge needs to be turned to let a train cross. NCRA feels strongly that the use of \$1.5 mil. in ISTEA funds to address this safety issue will benefit both agencies.

With respect to Quiet Zones, NCRA believes that 2 crossings east of the Ignacio Wye, Grandview and Renaissance, need to be included as Quiet Zone crossings in order to meet federal safety requirements. Accordingly, the total cost for Quiet Zones in Novato should be increased to \$1.5 mil. to cover 7 crossings: Rush Creek, Golden Gate Place, Olive Ave, Grant Ave, Hanna Ranch Road, Renaissance and Grandview.

NCRA also questions the practicality and cost-effectiveness of redoing the entire roadbed in Novato at the time welded rail is installed on this short portion of the corridor. As an alternative, NCRA recommends simply replacing the jointed rail with welded rail through Novato. When SMART is ready to begin work on the larger roadbed rehabilitation project for the entire corridor, the welded rail could easily be moved aside while the roadbed work is performed, then moved back into place.

We would also appreciate clarification regarding which projects are already designed, and your anticipated schedule for completion of design and award of contracts. The timing of this work is crucial, since NCRA expects to provide limited freight service to shippers this summer.

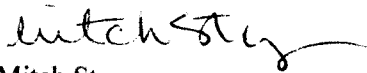
With these observations in mind, NCRA offers the following counter proposal for use of \$10.75 mil. (\$8.6 – NCRA + \$2.15 – SMART) for improvements which will benefit both systems:

1. Quiet Zones Improvements in Novato: As discussed, NCRA believes that the risk index is relatively high, and we believe that SMART, NCRA and the City of Novato will not want to absorb the liability of excluding the Grandview and Renaissance crossings in the Quiet Zone. Also, at the private crossing at Golden Gate Place, NCRA has already constructed the minimum requirements for a Quiet Zone. The estimate of \$342,500 must include updating existing equipment which should not be included in the Quiet Zone cost. Our all-in cost estimate for this proposed project is \$1.5 million.
2. Track Replacement in Novato: For the reasons stated above, limit the work to replacing the jointed rail with welded rail and performing the crossing improvements as named between Grandview and Rush Creek. This would reduce the MP 27.6 – MP 28.7 cost from \$4.323 million to \$1.5 million.
3. Black Point Automation: NCRA recommends that for safety reasons, and for the reasons outlined above, the Black Point bridge be automated. A concept plan has been prepared for this work, and we estimate the cost to be \$1.5 million.
4. Windsor to Healdsburg signals: Remaining funds would be allocated to signals beyond the currently rehabilitated area from Windsor north to establish a balance of repair work along the corridor.
5. Petaluma and Additional Grade Crossings: We would like to understand how the Measure M funding that has been set aside for crossing repairs, will be used for these crossings. Once again, NCRA recommends that crossing surface rehabilitation be performed north of Windsor to provide a balance, in terms of projects undertaken on the South End of the corridor (6<sup>th</sup> CD), and projects undertaken on the North End of the corridor (1<sup>st</sup> CD).

We would like to meet with you in April to discuss moving forward with this effort. We would be available April 15 or April 16 to continue our efforts to achieve consensus on a proposal that benefits both agencies.

Sincerely,

North Coast Railroad Authority



Mitch Stogner  
Executive Director

cc: Erin McGrath  
Allan Hemphill  
Doug Bosco  
C.J. Neary  
Angel Lucero  
Dave Anderson  
John H. Williams

**DRAFT: March 23, 2010**



**SCOPE OF WORK PROPOSAL: ISTE A EARMARK**

**SUMMARY:**

SMART has identified a proposed scope of work for the ISTE A earmark totaling approximately \$13 million. The list of improvements chosen was guided by the following principles and assumptions:

1. All the improvements proposed are located in the joint-use corridor where both SMART and NCRA plan to operate.
2. Because SMART plans to utilize Prop Q and Prop M funding as matching funds, SMART is limited in what project scope it can propose. Specifically, SMART believes it can only spend those funds on maintenance and improvements linked to the passenger rail system along the SMART corridor.
3. Where improvements are proposed, they are intended to be implemented only once and not re-done as part of the SMART project. Thus, all crossing improvements are designed and budgeted to ensure that SMART will not have to re-construct those intersections as part of its passenger rail project.
4. Highest priority was given to choosing project components that SMART has already fully designed.
5. Because of the importance of Novato improvements to NCRA, SMART has prioritized the design and implementation of all rail crossing and quiet zone improvements within Novato city limits to minimize impacts on both the community and the operation of freight when SMART begins construction of its passenger rail system.

Using these principles, below are the improvements proposed to be completed with the ISTE A funding earmark:

- a. **Quiet Zone Improvements in Novato: Total Cost \$1,308,350**  
Develop and construct quiet zone improvements in Novato between Hanna Ranch Road through Rush Creek Place. The improvements would assume shared freight and commuter service and consist of additional gates, median treatments and signage improvements.

- b. Track Replacement in Novato -- Grant Street to Novato North Station: Total Cost \$6,310,575**  
This work consists of designing and constructing new Class 4 track. The work would consist of completely removing the old track, excavating below subgrade and constructing a new track section with sub-ballast, ballast, ties, plates, fasteners and 136 lb rail. It includes siding track (~1/2 mi long) and the replacement of an existing industry turn-out.
- c. Petaluma Grade Crossings: Total cost \$1,620,830**  
Reconstruct three at-grade crossings at Payran Rd; McDowell Blvd; and Corona Rd. This work is for the "in-ground" portion of the grade crossing and does not include protection systems – gates, flashers, etc., except for any quiet zone improvements that be identified. Two of three, Payran and Corona have been completely designed.
- d. Additional Grade Crossings between Petaluma and Healdsburg: Total Cost \$3,710,580.** All but one crossing are already fully designed. These crossing improvements are also just for "in-ground" improvements and do not include signal improvements, except for Limerick Lane and Grant Avenue.



# Memorandum

Date: April 8, 2010

To: Mitch Stogner, Executive Director

From: David Anderson, PE

Regarding: Comparison of SMART Proposed and NCRA Response ISTEAs Scope of Work

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As requested, the following is an analysis that compares the scope of work proposed by SMART for the ISTEAs funds, and the NCRA proposed scope of work for the same funds.

## **Quiet Zone (QZ) in Novato:**

The primary difference is the inclusion by NCRA and the exclusion by SMART of the crossings from Ignacio to Black Point. These crossings are included in the Novato Consent Decree and, based on FRA horn rules, are required to be included in order to establish a freight rail QZ in Novato, and therefore a combined SMART/NCRA QZ in Novato.

## **Track Improvements in Novato:**

SMART is proposing the complete rehabilitation to Class 4 of 1.1 miles of track from MP 27.6 to 28.7 including the grade crossing surfaces. NCRA is proposing to complete the grade crossing surfaces and only replace the existing jointed rail with new continuously welded rail (CWR). To completely rehabilitate 1.1 miles of rail would be very costly for such a small area.

## **Black Point Bridge Automation:**

This project is included only in the NCRA scope of work. This is included by NCRA due to the bridge's vital role as a link to the national rail network. The efficient operation of this bridge would provide both SMART and NCRA economic access to materials and equipment for construction as well as quick response of vital equipment in case of an emergency.

## **Signal Improvements Outside of Novato ZQ:**

SMART includes signal improvements in Petaluma and Healdsburg related to QZ's. NCRA's proposal for additional signal work outside of Novato is only for work north of Windsor, beyond the currently rehabilitated area, to establish a balance of repair work along the corridor.

## **Grade Crossing Surfaces:**

SMART includes several grade crossing surfaces from Novato to Healdsburg. NCRA is proposing to complete the surfaces in Novato in conjunction with the replacement of rail work in this area and crossings north of Windsor.