

Board of Directors Meeting: November 15, 2023 – Public Comments

Date	Name	2. Approval of October 18, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes
		None
Date	Name	5. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
		None
Date	Name	6. Consent a. Accept Monthly Ridership Report – October 2023 b. Approval of Monthly Financial Reports – September 2023
		None
Date	Name	7. Discuss Ridership vs. Farebox Recovery Strategy and Provide Direction to Staff Regarding Future Initiatives – <i>Presented by General Manager Eddy Cumins</i>
		None
Date	Name	8. Authorizing the General Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County of Sonoma to construct riparian enhancements at Helen Putnam Regional Park and for Regional Park staff to maintain and report on the improvements as mitigation for construction of SMART’s non-motorized pathway impacts – <i>Presented by Chief Engineer, Bill Gamlen</i>
		None
Date	Name	9. Adopt a Resolution Amending Resolution No. 2023-23, the Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget, to carryforward an additional \$2,386,104 in revenue and increase the spending authority by \$3,832,044 – <i>Presented by Chief Financial Officer McKillop</i>
		None
Date	Name	10. Adopt a Resolution Amending Resolution No. 2023-23, the Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget, to add funds for the SMART Santa Rosa Airport to Windsor Rail and Pathway Extension project in the amount of \$17,663,452 – <i>Presented by Chief Financial Officer McKillop</i>
		None

Board of Directors Meeting: November 15, 2023 – Public Comments

Date	Name	11. Adopt a Resolution Awarding the Issuance of Notices to Proceed for Project Civil Scope of Work and Change Order 015 to Construction Contract No. CV-DB-18-001 with Stacy and Witbeck, Inc. in the amount of \$8,268,237 for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$57,178,129 for the complete construction of the SMART Windsor Extension Civil Project, the civil engineering and construction portion of the overall SMART Windsor Rail and Pathway Extension – <i>Presented by Chief Engineer, Bill Gamlen</i>
		None
Date	Name	12. Adopt a Resolution Awarding the Issuance of Notices to Proceed for Project Systems Scope of Work and Change Order 004 to Construction Contract No. SYS-DB-18-001 with Modern Railway Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$2,415,741 for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$17,338,233 for the complete construction of the SMART Windsor Rail Systems Project, the systems portion of the overall SMART Windsor Rail and Pathway Extension – <i>Presented by Chief Engineer, Bill Gamlen</i>
		None
Date	Name	13. Discuss Freight Storage and Provide Direction to Staff Regarding Storage Limitations <i>Presented by General Manager Cumins</i>
11/13 – 11/14, 2023	Various	Attached
Date	Name	14. Conference with Legal Counsel regarding existing litigation pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9(a); Number of cases: (3) 1) James Duncan v. Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit; City of Santa Rosa, Real Party in Interest; County of Sonoma, Real Party in Interest; Sonoma County Superior Court Case No. SCV-266092; First Dist. Court of Appeal Case No. A165783 2) James Duncan v. SMART; CPUC No. C.21-06-011 3) Application of City of Santa Rosa for a Crossing at Jennings Avenue; CPUC No. A.15-05-014
11/13 – 11/14, 2023	Various	Attached

From: [Norman Gilroy](#)
To: [Leticia Rosas](#)
Subject: Fwd: Comments re the potential storage of LPG at the Schellville yard (with attached report)
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 1:15:09 PM
Attachments: [Attachment.pdf to SMART letter Sep 2023.pdf](#)

Leti, Would you please include this letter and attachment in the Board packet that I understand from Eddy you will send out tomorrow for the meeting on Wednesday? For Item 13 re the potential inclusion of loaded LPG tankers at the SMART freight storage yard in Schellville.

Thanks. Please confirm. Norman Gilroy.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Norman Gilroy <ngilroy@vom.com>
Subject: **Comments re the potential storage of LPG at the Schellville yard (with attached report)**
Date: September 11, 2023 at 20:27:34 PDT
To: Eddy Cumins <ecumins@sonomamarintrain.org>

The attached material is submitted as input to your ongoing study of potential sources of revenue for SMART's freight system, and it contains information relevant to any attempt to bring tankers loaded with LPG back to the Schellville yard.

The material (particularly the attachments) contained in the attached file has been largely adapted from a file that was first discussed by SMART at the time that the Board voted in 2021 to not store LPG at the Schellville yard. That was shortly before you took over as General Manager at SMART.

The same material was also shared with, and formally recognized by, the State of California when it negotiated the shutdown of NCRA and the subsequent transfer of freight services to SMART.

So, though the concepts attached here are not new, they do seem relevant now that the issue of LPG storage at the Schellville yard may be reopened.

In summary, the report in the attached file finds that, in order to store hazardous materials long term at the Schellville yard, SMART would have to first:

- obtain a hazardous materials storage permit from the County of Sonoma (which would be expensive to process),
- process an amendment to the Sonoma County General Plan that would allow such a use in an agricultural zone (also expensive and time consuming),

process applications for permits from any other state and local agencies with jurisdiction (water, air, waste disposal, climate emissions, etc.),

- conduct a full EIR under CEQA which, given the complexity of the issue, could take well over a year to process and would likely cost over \$1M,
- install safety improvements at the yard that would, by our estimates, cost more than \$10 M in the current construction market

And in the process, SMART would likely run the risk of losing the good will of the voters in the entire Sonoma Valley.

Taken together, just accomplishing the tasks listed here and in the attached report would likely mean a delay of at least three years before storage could begin (if the permits needed are even possible given the circumstances). It would also involve a capital expenditure in excess of \$13 million that could be used elsewhere in the SMART system. And all that would be needed to generate an eventual maximum net income of just \$300,000 a year after the annual costs of handling the storage and insuring the risk are deducted from gross revenues.

At that rate, it would take SMART more than 40 years to amortize the capital costs and to show a real flow of unencumbered income to the freight system.

Additionally, with that decision would go the very real risk that SMART could lose everything should a single explosion and bleve occur at the Schellville yard - a fate that has befallen several rail operators in other places from Canada and the east coast to, most recently, East Palestine.

That isn't the kind of proposition that I would recommend to any Board, or that I would recommend to the constituents of the District in the Sonoma Valley and beyond. But, quite obviously the decision regarding that recommendation remains with you.

I hope the attached information is useful to you. Most of it is a summary of other previous studies, and the references in it can be reconstructed should you need to do that. We look forward to seeing your recommendations, and I remain available to be of assistance in finding other sources of freight revenue should you want to reach out.

In concern for the future of SMART, and for the well being of the people of the Sonoma Valley.

Norman Gilroy, on behalf of Mobilize Sonoma.

Attachment below.

- CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message, together with any attachments, is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is confidential and/or privileged and prohibited from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, or copying of this message, or any attachment, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the original sender immediately by telephone or by return e-mail and delete this message along with any attachments.

MOBILIZE SONOMA

Date: September 8, 2023
To: Eddy Cumins, General Manager, SMART
From: Norman Gilroy, on behalf of Mobilize Sonoma

Regarding: Proposed storage of hazardous materials at the SMART rail-yard in Schellville

We have not yet seen the staff report, but we presume that you are planning to return to the Board meeting on September 20 with more information about the storage issue at the Schellville rail yard, and potentially about whether hazardous materials (LPG and fertilizer products in particular) should be stored at that location.

Before you complete your recommendations, we would ask that you to consider the following points. All were made in 2021 when the SMART Board made its promise to the community that SMART would not store LPG at that location in the future. Many of the points listed here were also part of, and recognized in, the transfer process through which SMART received responsibility for freight transfer from the State after NCRA was dissolved in 2019.

In making these comments, we should make it clear that:

- a. the concerns expressed here extend only to the proposed storage of explosive or hazardous materials (in particular LPG) at the SMART rail storage yard at Schellville – i.e. the two 6,000 feet long auxiliary tracks owned by SMART that run parallel to the through-line on the Lombard Segment of the rail line through south-eastern Sonoma County. Our comments do **not** apply to the adjacent through-track, which is under Federal jurisdiction and subject to Federal preemptions.
- b. In making these comments, it is not our intention to in any way unreasonably interfere with interstate commerce, or with the movement of rail cars from their origin to their ultimate destinations. It is rather our intention to protect the safety of property owners and the public in the entire lower Sonoma Valley, an objective which aligns with concerns expressed on numerous occasions by the state and by federal agencies with railroad authority.
- c. We recognize that it was not intent in your original proposal as General Manager to store loaded LPG tankers at the Schellville yard (you asked to be allowed to research options). That suggestion came up in the Board discussion that followed your staff report, and it is to that discussion that this document responds. Much of the content contained here was discussed by the Farhad Mansourian and the SMART Board in 2021, but it seems relevant again now in view of the recent discussion to which it refers.

Dangers of hazardous materials storage.

While we agree with those who believe that industrial rail-tankers Schellville are an inappropriate visual feature to place at the entrance to scenic wine country in the Sonoma Valley, this letter focuses more on the dangers a hazardous materials storage yard would present to the health and well-being of the local residents and businesses in the area, and to the many, many people from all parts of the North Bay who pass through the area in their cars on nearby Highway 121, 8th Street East and Arnold Drive.

**Contact us at: Mobilize Sonoma, PO Box 552, Vineburg CA 95487.
Email: Mobilizesonoma@vom.com Web: www.mobilizesonoma.org**

Though there are some who dismiss the dangers of an explosion or fire due to a derailing or overturning of a rail car by asserting “it can never happen here”, there are many thousands of people in locations all across North America (see Attachment G) who know from direct experience that a disaster of significant size can happen anywhere that hazardous products are present or stored. And just the recent derailing in March of three loaded railcars at the north end of the Schellville yard, and the overturning and spilling of its load (grain fortunately) by one of the cars, confirms that “it can, in fact, happen here” under present conditions and without warning.

The results of a single accident could be lives lost, property burned or damaged, and sensitive habitat destroyed, all within an impact area much larger than the storage yard itself.

To be specific, if one or more tanker cars were to overturn at the same location as where the derailment took place in March, and if a spark were to occur, the resulting explosion and “bleve” could take out the adjacent electrical high-tension transmission lines near the yard that serve a wide area of Sonoma County. At the same time, it could also destroy several vital utility hubs and the local fire station, and cause serious damage to the nearby sanitation plant which serves 17,500 residents from the City of Sonoma to Glen Ellen and a number of the industrial and winery businesses on 8th Street East.

Large-scale area-wide evacuations would then be necessary and would continue until services from the sanitation plant are restored – a process that could take several weeks or months and result in severe hardships to virtually all of the people and the businesses of the area. Smoke & air pollution from such a fire would also affect the air quality of the entire region, with pollution lasting for an extended period as it did after the fires that devastated the County in October 2017.

And the smoke and fire, coupled with the inevitable release of toxic foams used in firefighting, would result in marshland devastation. Wildlife kills would be widespread due to the toxic spills from the tankers themselves, and from the specialized toxic foams used to fight petroleum-based fires. Not a pleasant prospect to consider.

Vulnerability of the site.

The yard, as presently constructed (see Attachment B) has numerous features or conditions which are either hazardous now or could cause serious hazards in the event of an accident in the future:

1. The location of the yard is inappropriate as a site for the storage of hazardous materials in a number of ways:

- The layer of deep unstable marshland soils on which the track and the entire yard is founded make it vulnerable to soil failure and subsidence in a flood, and to soil liquefaction and subsidence in an earthquake. Two active earthquake faults parallel the yard less than a mile away to the east and west (see Attachment F).
- Extensive flooding occurs annually in the marshlands around the yard (see Attachment C) .
- Access to the site is wide open, with no fencing or other controls to prevent access by vandals intent on doing damage or domestic terrorists in search of a soft target.
- The site is open to sensitive adjacent marshland environments, and to numerous channels that stretch all the way to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Preserve and to San Francisco Bay.
- The yard is close to vital power and natural gas distribution lines, to two major highways, and to many vulnerable businesses and residential areas (see Attachment E) , all of which would be vulnerable in the event of a fire or explosion at the Schellville yard.
- The Eighth Street Sewage Treatment Plant lies within the potential blast zone, and LPG storage at the rail yard would endanger all of the households in the City of Sonoma and residents in the Sonoma Valley all the way to Glen Ellen.

2. The site has virtually none of the protections that would be expected of a hazardous materials storage site under other conditions, and providing those protections would be costly (see Attachment H). Missing are:

- Protective fencing, lighting or security cameras to detect or deter acts of vandalism or domestic terrorism.
- Blast protection or deflection walls or other protection strong enough and placed strategically to contain an explosion and fire should an accident occur.
- Permanent fire-protection and fire-fighting equipment (water or foam). The headquarters of the local first-responders, the Schell Vista Fire Department, are located well inside the blast zone from the tanker yard, and as a result they may not be in a position to deliver vital fire-protection or life-support services should an explosion occur at the yard.
- Security patrols or technology. Present patrols, such as they are, are intermittent and inadequate for a site with such potential for damage or for vandalism, domestic terrorism or other interference, day or night.
- Spill-containment structures to prevent any spills that occur from entering the adjacent marshland ecosystem. A major spill, or use of a foam for fighting a petroleum-based fires, could pour toxins into the delicate marshland environment that could find their way to San Francisco Bay and the San Pablo Bay Federal Wildlife Preserve in a matter of hours.

The high concentration of explosive toxic materials (LPG), and the close clustering of up to 160 tankers capable of storing a combined 5 million gallons of LPG at any one time, presents a clear and present danger of a serial explosion at the site, with potentially catastrophic results.

3. The dangers of an overturning, and subsequent explosion and fire, at this location (and SMART's vulnerability as an organization in such an event) should not be underestimated. The more than 37 accidents that occurred in North America between 2012 and 2019 (plus several high profile incidents since) attest to the high potential for extensive blast and fire damage that could occur due to an explosion or "bleve" at the Schellville yard should hazardous materials be stored there.

All of these factors, and the costs to overcome them, should be considered before any decision is made to bring the tankers back to the Schellville yard.

Jurisdiction and the need for a hazardous materials storage permit.

In any case involving a railroad, the question is raised as to whether a local or state agency has jurisdiction, or whether federal pre-emptions apply. From our research, and based on discussions over the past three years with Federal and State officials based in Sacramento, it seems clear that a) the Schellville yard is subject to local jurisdiction with respect to the storage of hazardous materials, and b) that the County of Sonoma has jurisdiction in the unincorporated area of the Sonoma Valley to require a hazardous material storage permit for such storage under Section 29 of the Sonoma County Code. It is also our belief that other State permitting requirements could also apply should the hazardous materials storage topic be pursued further by SMART.

The following factors should be taken into account in that regard:

1. **Storage of hazardous materials would be a new, and presently unpermitted, use at the Schellville yard.** While storage of railcars has occurred at the Schellville yard for many years, the storage of hazardous materials, and all that implies, only began in 2016 as a result of a settlement, made under pressure by SMART, to resolve a lawsuit brought by the now-defunct NCRA. Prior to that time, SMART had adamantly opposed the storage of hazardous materials at Schellville and at other locations in Sonoma and Marin where it provides service, and LPG tankers were not stored at the yard. .

2. **No permits presently exist** that would allow SMART to store hazardous materials at the Schellville yard,
3. **The storage yard is subject to local regulation.** Federal officers advise that the entire double track storage yard at Schellville (as distinct from the through-line immediately adjacent to it) is classified as “private track” as defined in Section 49 CFR 171.1 of the Federal railroad law. As private track, it is outside of federal jurisdiction, and federal pre-emptions do not apply. Inspectors tell us that, in recognition of this, federal inspections only occur when rail cars enter or leave the yard (i.e. not while they are in the yard) even though rail cars may actually be stored there for periods of several months.

As “private track”, the yard is “subject to state and local regulation” under the provisions of Section 49 CFR 171.1. In this case, local regulation would include the requirement that a hazardous materials storage permit be obtained from the County of Sonoma under Section 29 of the County code. Other permitting requirements (water and air quality for example) at both a state and local level may also apply.

4. **Hazardous material storage would be in potential violation of the Sonoma County General Plan.**

Nowhere in the Sonoma County General Plan are the marshlands at the south end of the Sonoma Valley considered a suitable or appropriate location for a hazardous-materials (LPG) storage yard. Instead GP 2020 identifies the management of hazardous materials as **“a major public safety issue requiring significant resources and attention by local agencies”** and it states that **“the Department of Fire and Emergency Services has been designated as the lead agency for preparation of a comprehensive hazardous materials management plan”**.

The General Plan also discourages such uses **“in any area subject to a very strong ground shaking hazard” (Policy PS-4h.) or “any area designated for urban residential or rural residential use or on agricultural lands” (Policy PS-4.i.)**. The Schellville yard is in an area that fits both definitions. USGS mapping shows the rail yard to be between, and paralleled by, two active earthquake faults (Rodgers Creek and Eastside). Both faults are only a mile away (see Attachment F), and the yard is underlain with a deep layer of the kind of marshland soils that are extremely prone to liquefaction and settlement in an earthquake.

5. **CEQA review would also be required**, quite possibly in tandem with the hazardous materials storage permit application. The California Supreme Court confirmed in its 2017 “Friends of the Eel River vs. NCRA et. al.” ruling that, even though they both operate railroads, the actions of both NCRA and SMART “as subdivisions of the State of California” are subject to review under CEQA “as a matter of self governance exercised by the state over its own subdivisions”. The Court ruled that requiring CEQA review is therefore not a violation of federal railroad law or pre-emptions claimed by the defendants. The US Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal in 2017, and the California Court’s ruling stands and requires CEQA review in a case like this “as a matter of self governance”.

Risk and insurance considerations.

The potential dangers to life and property in this situation are considerable, and acting after an accident has occurred is not a viable or acceptable option. As one risk-consultant said when viewing the site: “The day-to-day risk may be seen as low, but the risk in the event of an accident would be catastrophic.” And an “accident” could happen at any time that hazardous materials are stored at the Schellville yard.

As with any new activity considered by SMART, the implications of risk must be considered when new, and potentially hazardous uses like those under consideration for the Schellville yard are proposed. Clearly the potential for fire and explosion is one of the risks to be taken into account with the storage of LPG. Even for just a single event, the potential is high for direct financial losses in the multi-millions of dollars and claims due to loss of life, injury and damage to nearby property and businesses. The claims in such an “accident” could financially and logistically overwhelm SMART, affecting all of its activities throughout the region. This must be viewed, therefore, not just as a local risk (though that is issue enough), but as a system-wide risk factor that should be taken seriously in any prudent plan for the future.

Experience at other places where LPG-associated accidents have happened elsewhere in North America have shown that conventional insurance coverage, where it has been available (and that is not always certain), has been both expensive to buy and entirely insufficient when responding to, or reimbursing for, claims. Self insurance reserves are quickly overwhelmed, and many national and independent insurers have proven themselves extremely adept at looking the other way when it comes to paying for claims. As a result, many of the affected carriers and communities have been severely affected, some to the point of bankruptcy, due to the delays involved and the shortfalls in payments received. Many affected local businesses have reported that they lost everything in the aftermath due to slow, or non-existent, reimbursement for losses.

Should SMART continue to think at all about proceeding with the storage of hazardous materials in Schellville, the question must be answered as to which of us who live and work in the vicinity of the yard will be named insured parties in any insurance policies purchased by SMART, and which of us would be left to fight it out with the others for claims that will go unanswered or be settled for pennies on the dollar. That discussion should come before a decision like this is implemented, not afterward when it is too late. So far there has been no discussion regarding this concern.

Costs associated with storage of hazardous materials.

Consideration should be given not only to the gross revenues that could be realized from LPG storage at the Schellville yard, but also to the costs that would be involved in both establishing and operating a hazardous materials storage yard at that locations. A preliminary study of costs completed in 2019 estimated that just the up-front cost of safety and access improvements needed at the yard to mitigate risk would be in excess of \$7 Million – more than \$10 million at 2023 prices (see Attachment H) .

That would seem to far outweigh the potential net revenues that could be derived from LPG storage, and to be an investment of capital funds that would be better spent elsewhere in SMART’s system.

Public concern in the Sonoma Valley.

Generally the community in the Sonoma Valley trusts SMART to make the right decisions where it operates, perhaps because SMART provides little or no direct services in the Sonoma Valley. However, in 2019, when the question of tanker storage at the Schellville yard was a hot button issue, four hundred members of the community came together in just a couple of weeks to sign a hand-circulated “Tankers Out” petition. It was presented to the SMART Board, and it was a factor in the Board’s decision not to store LPG in Schellville.

That same sentiment continues in the Sonoma Valley today, as will be illustrated in current terms should the issue continue further.

In conclusion, it would seem that;

- a) both the **costs** (necessary capital expenditures for physical improvements, costs of insurance, safety and surveillance, etc.) and the **risks** (including the potential financial risk to the entire SMART system in case of an accident) far outweigh any revenues that could be derived by SMART from the storage of LPG and other hazardous materials in Schellville, and
- b) if the hazardous materials storage option were to be pursued, SMART will still have a long way to go, and major additional costs to incur, to comply with the permitting and CEQA review processes necessary to implement the operation in Schellville,

In closing, it seems appropriate to comment that It was unfortunate that some of the critics at SMART's recent Board meeting, and some since in the press, have sneered at those who, they said, have an "emotional" reaction to the hazardous materials storage issue near their homes and businesses. "Go for the profit" they inferred, "the public be damned"

That attitude misses the point that SMART's entire enterprise is focused on the quality, and, sensitivity of its service to the people of its constituency – and the people of the Sonoma Valley are part of that constituency. In fact SMART is itself dependent for its survival upon the revenues those same people generate for its own survival, whether as riders of the system or as voters when the time comes to renew the sales tax levy which keeps SMART running. So paying respect to the responses of the people, whether emotional or practical, would seem to be good policy for SMART's Board, and for the people who work for SMART.

The prospect of again seeing that ominous line of loaded grey tankers sitting across the floor of the valley full of explosive materials is an emotional issue for many who live here. It is a matter of constant and persistent worry to many members of our community who live and work in the Schellville area. The stress we feel can be compared to what was felt by residents of the entire valley when we saw the line of fire coming over the hill in the October fires – except that, in this case the danger we fear has the potential of being caused by one of the public agencies that we depend on to serve us.

In fact I doubt very much that any members of the SMART Board would vote willingly (or unemotionally) to place a hazardous materials storage yard on unstable soils right across the street from their own residence, or near the home of one of their own grown children.

Yet that same decision seems to be on the table again for the people of Schellville and the Sonoma Valley. From talking to the people of our neighborhoods, it is clear that emotional damage is being caused by the reawakening of the threat of danger and loss of life. And there is a growing questioning of trust, as SMART has again opened up the issue which we understood had been settled.

We know that, as General Manager, you have the interests of the public at heart in what you are doing. Please put people before profit in this case, and look for other solutions that do not entail putting people and property at risk.

Thank you for your attention to these observations.

Norman Gilroy, for Mobilize Sonoma

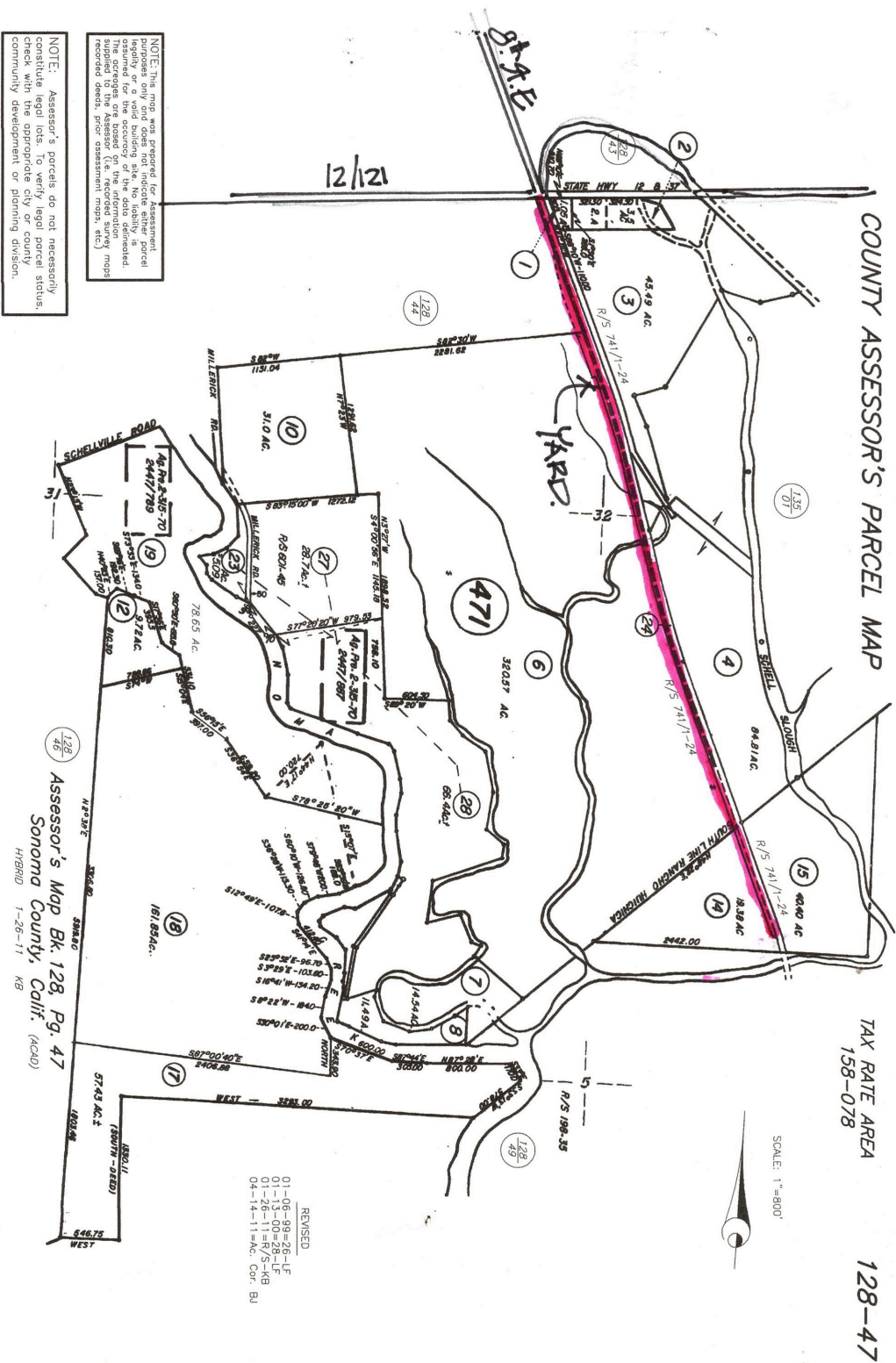
Attachment A.

The attached location map shows the tanker yard as a red line accompanied by an asterisk. The map also shows many of the wineries and businesses that are in the vicinity of the hazardous materials storage yard.



Attachment A. continued.

The 6,000 foot long rail storage yard involved in this complaint is shown in red on the attached Assessors Map (page 128-47). Parcel numbers include APs 128-471-024 , 128-471-014, and 128-444-003.



Attachment B. Aerial view of the tanker yard looking south – October 2018.

View of the hazardous materials storage yard taken looking south from the intersection of 8th Street East and Highway 121. Close to 160 tanker cars are in place, closely packed in two rows each a mile long.



Attachment C.

Photos of flooding around the yard in 2018-19.

The mile long tanker yard is at the center of both photos. It shows as a thin strip of levee completely surrounded by the floodwaters that cover and saturate the marshlands that underlie the site. Sonoma Creek is west of (above) the yard in both photos. The channels and flooded areas that link to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Preserve are at the bottom and to the left.



Some of the parked rail-tankers can be seen below in this 2019 photo taken before they were moved for storage on active track until the flooding around the yard abated. A levee-break near the Trap Club on Burndale Road (in the lower right corner of the photo below) remained in place until the beginning of April 2019. Levee breaks are a frequent occurrence during high flows and flooding around the storage yard.



Attachment D.

Tankers parked on active track close to passing motorists on Highway 121 during the flooding in 2019.



The photos here include a view looking toward the south that shows the more than 100 hazardous-materials rail-tankers that were parked on active track below the Rams Gate hill and close to Ravenswood Winery and Sonoma Raceway for a long period in January 2019.

At their closest point (see the middle of both photos), the tankers are within easy blast range of traffic on busy Highway 121, the primary connection between the San Francisco Bay Area and Wine Country. The track is totally without fencing to prevent access to the tankers from passers-by on the highway.



Attachment E.

List of public services and businesses most affected by the dangers at the yard.

All of the locations and services listed below are either within the blast zone should an explosion occur, or in the secondary zone in which blast-wind driven flames are likely to set buildings and services alight.

Public service facilities: the following would be out of action:

- **Schellville Fire Station** - first-responder fire and disaster response station.
- **8th Street Sonoma Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant** – service interruption would leave 12,000 residences & businesses without services, 17,500 people in danger of evacuation.
- **PG&E gas distribution station** – newly installed regional natural gas switching station.
- **SMART’s own staging site** –long-term interruption of regional freight rail transit.
- **Highway 121 & Highway 116 intersection** – primary access to Sonoma, Napa Valley, Petaluma, Marin & San Francisco
- **Schellville Airport** –the primary emergency air-transport evacuation location in a disaster.

Private businesses: all lie within the blast zone or the impact zone subject to fire.

- **Mulas Dairy**, award winning dairy business, 850 dairy cows, several residences and processing buildings, hayfields vital to the business, etc.
- **Larsen Winery** – 5,000 case estate winery popular with visitors to the Carneros,
- **Victory Station** – 250,000 sq.ft. of new industrial warehouse and processing space,
- **Carneros Business Park** – 153 acres, includes Chanel Cheese, Ganau America cork, etc.
- **Ceja Winery and Hansen Distillery** – premium winery & distiller of craft spirits,
- **All Truss** – roof & floor truss manufacturing plant important to construction industry
- **Arrowsmith Farms**, Acacia Avenue – small diversified farm east of Burndale,
- **Homes on Burndale south of 121** – more than 30 homes, all with values in excess of \$1M.
- **Homewood Winery** – popular small winery on Burndale Road.
- **Businesses on Maffei Road** – variety of small businesses essential to local agriculture.
- **Cornerstone** – wineries & local shops, Sunset Magazine, businesses, tourism destination and site of many events with large attendance, local and from the Bay Area.
- **Jacuzzi Winery** – premium winery & event center, site of many weddings.
- **Viansa Winery** – winery with tastings and tours, marshland preserve and
- **Valley of The Moon Trap Club** – sports & recreation venue, “last of the small hunt clubs”.

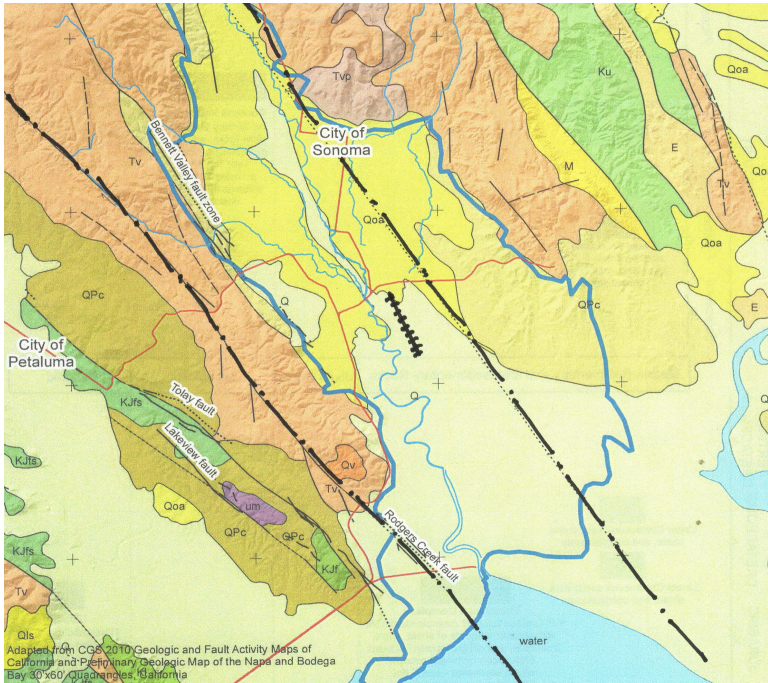
Environmental resources: all within reach of a spill at the Schellville yard:

- **Wingo marshlands** – delicate marshland environments easily destroyed by spills or fire,
- **Sonoma Creek** – the main drainage-way and flood-control channel for Sonoma Valley, and the primary connection to the diverse wildlife habitat of the area,
- **Baylands wildlife conservation area** –Railroad Slough connects direct to Sonoma Creek,
- **San Pablo National Wildlife Refuge** – immediately downstream from the Wingo marsh,
- **San Francisco Bay** – immediately downstream of Sonoma Creek.

Regional services: all would be out of service or heavily impacted after a “bleve” explosion.

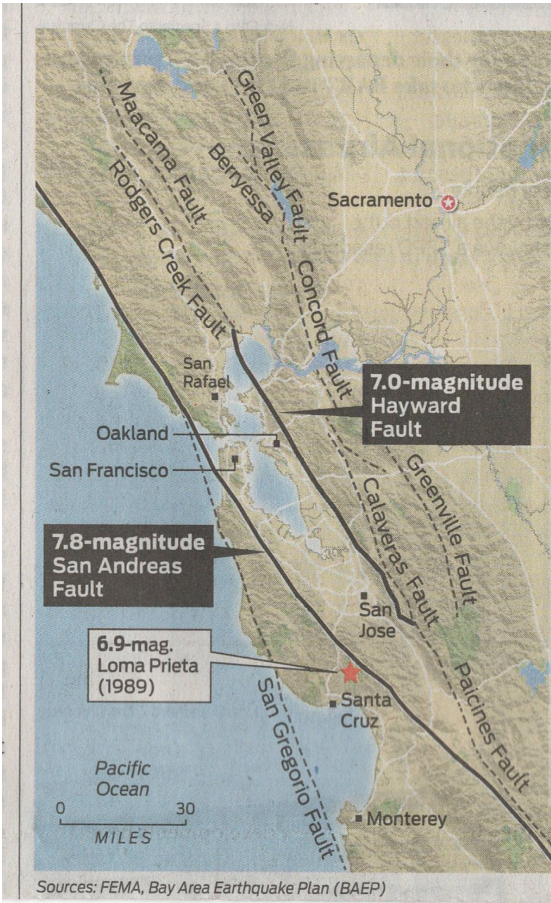
- **SR 37** - heavy traffic loads and long delays caused by diversions due to road closure.
- **SR 80** - additional traffic loads due to closure of east-west cross Sonoma traffic flow.
- **SR 101** – additional traffic from diversions due to road closures on SR 37 and 121.
- **Surrounding communities of Sonoma and the Sonoma Valley** – congestion and traffic delays due to loss of transportation corridors and evacuations caused by fires and the loss of wastewater treatment services.

Attachment F. Geologic maps showing the area around the Schellville yard



The USGS geologic map above shows the tanker yard (hatched line) as it is located between the Eastside Fault to the east and the Rodgers Creek Fault to the west (chain-link lines).

The FEMA map to the right shows the relationship between those faults and the earthquake fault system in the San Francisco Bay Area. The “magnitude” numbers in the boxes indicate the severity of the earthquakes predicted there in coming years.



Attachment G.

Thirty-seven major rail-tanker accidents occurred in North America between 2012 & 2019.

Railroad Tanker accidents in North America since 2012.								
			Key: HM means Hazardous Materials		U signifies "unknown"			
In every one of these, the expectation up until that day was that this could never happen. It did!								
Date	Location	Type of Accident	Cause	No. of cars involved	Deaths	Injuries	Property damage	Environmental damage
6/22/2018	Doon, Iowa	Spill	Derailment	32	0	U	U	230,000 gal. HM spill into Little Rock River
6/17/2018	Princeton, Ind.	5 car explosion, fire	Derailment	89	U	0	U	Mandatory evacuation
5/19/2018	Franconia, Va.	Derailment	Subsidence	91	0	0	\$5-7 Million	U
3/18/2018	Scott County, Ky.	Head-on collision	Employee error	13 derailed	0	4	Home burned	U
2/4/2018	Cayce, S.C.	2 train collision	Train on wrong track	2 trains	2	116	2 trains	5,000 gal. HM spill
1/28/2018	Harrodsburg, Ky.	Collision	Truck on track	U	0	0	Truck/Train	40 gal HM spill
6/20/2017	Sellersville, Pa.	Collision	Derailment	3 derailed	0	0	U	U
4/1/2017	Money, Miss.	Spill	Derailment	10 of 12	0	0		HM spill
3/10/2017	Graettinger, Ia.	Derailment	U	27 of 101	0	0	Bridge burned	spill damage in Jack Creek
3/7/2017	Newburgh, N.Y.	Derailed, hit truck	Collision	3 loco. & 6 cars	0	2	Truck/Train	HM spill
7/28/2016	Spring City, Tenn.	Derailment	Faulty wheel	49 of 122	0	0	Cargo dumped w/in city	Major city cleanup
6/28/2016	Panhandle, Texas	Collision	Trains collide	2 Engines, 112cars	3	0	\$16million	"significant fire" reported
6/3/2016	Columbia River Gorge, Oregon	Derailment	Broken track bolt	96	0	0	Fiery derailment	42,000 gallon HM spill
5/1/2016	Washington, D.C.	Derailment	Unknown	14 cars	0	0	large HM spill	Major cleanup
11/13/2015	Upper Merion, Pa.	Derailment	Switch malfunction	5	0	0	spill contained	contained
11/7/2015	Watertown, Wisc.	Derailment	Track junction	13	0	0	35 homes evacuated	contained
11/6/2015	Alma Wisc.	Dersailment/spill	track intersection	11 of 25	0	0	23,000 gal HM spill	leak adjacent to Mississippi River
7/16/2015	Culbertson, Mont.	Derailment	U	20 cars of 108	U	U	U	35,000 gal.HM spill
7/2/2015	Knoxville, Tenn.	Derailment	Unattended train	1	0	0	Potential of spill of HM	5,000 people evacuated for two days.
5/6/2015	Heimdal, N.D.	Explosion, Spillage	Derailment	109 cars, 6 exploded	0	0	40 people evacuated	U
3/10/2015	Bakken, N.D.	Derailment	Derailment	21	U	U	Bridge destroyed	U
3/7/2015	Gogama, Ontario	Delailment, fire	Derailment	94	U	U	U	
3/5/2015	Galena, Ill.	Fire, spillage	Derailment	21 of 105 cars	0	0	U	HM burned, smoke, fire spill contained
3/2/2015	Meacham, Oregon	Derailment	HM spill	10	0	0	spill contained	spill contained
2/16/2015	Mt. Carbon, W.Va.	Derailing and fire	Defective rail	27 of 109 cars derailed	0	1	24 cars burned for more than a week	Oil spilled into Kanawha river tributary
2/14/2015	Ontario, Canada	Fire burned for a week	Derailment	100	U	U	U	Damage to remote ecosystem
10/5/2014	Mer Rouge, La.	Derailment, HM leak	Collision w/truck	17 of 87	0	2	50 homes evacuated	Impacted locale.
4/30/2014	Lynchburg, Va.	Overturn, fire,	Derailment	3 of 15 tankers spilled HM	0	0	Waterfront property damage	30,000 gal spillage in James River
1/31/2014	New Augusta, Miss.	Leaking HM & liquid fertilizer	Derailment	18 of 24 cars	0	0	12 families evacuated, Hwy 98 closed	Spillage in farmland
1/28/2014	McDavid, Fla.	HM spill	Derailment	23 of 69 cars	0	0	Tracks and bridge destroyed	HM spill into Fletcher Creek
1/7/2014	Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, Canada	Intense fire burned for days	Faulty brake application, broken wheel	19 of 122 cars	U	U	Significant property damage	HM residue leaked, 150 people of 1,000 evacuated
12/30/2013	Casselton, N.D.	Derailment, collision	Collision of trains after broken wheel	30 of 106 tank cars	0	0	Major evacuation	Town of 2,300 evacuated
11/8/2013	Aliceville, Pickens County, Ala.	Explosion, fire, flames 300' in air	Derailment	90	0	0	749,000 gals. spilled	Left to burn itself out
7/5/2013	LeMagantic, Quebec	Runaway train, explosion	Unattended train	72 cars derailed	42	5 missing	30 buildings destroyed in town center	2,000 evacuated, town destroyed
11/30/2012	Paulsboro, N.J.	Derailment on swing bridge	Untrained conductor	U	0	100	Equipment \$451,000, \$30M for total response	U
10/29/2012	West Point, Ky.	Explosion and fire with gas leak	Derailment	13 of 57 cars derailed	0	5, 3 burned	Evacuations in 2 kilometer area	U
7/11/2012	Columbus, Ohio	Explosion, fire, derailment	Derailment with 90,000 gals of HM	2 engines, 98 cars	0	0	Evacuated 30 homes, warning in mile radius	Crews worked to protect water and air quality

Attachment H.

Costs of safety improvements required

The cost analysis shown here was prepared in 2019. It showed the costs associated with the installation of safety improvements at the Schellville yard in excess of \$7million. The likely cost in 2023 could well exceed \$10 million.

Estimate of costs associated with safety & security improvements required for hazardous-materials rail storage yard at Schellville.					
Item	Lin. Feet	description	cost per unit	estimated cost	notes
AC guestimates except below line 19					
A. Security only					
security fencing	12,000	12' high, sturdy, chain link?	36	432,000	needs secure foundation
B. With blast protection					
Blast wall	12,000	12' high, concrete or reinforced concrete block, with buttresses to resist overturning force from blast	200	2,400,000	needs secure foundation on, or through, 35' layer of unconsolidated marshland soils underneath
All options					
containment ditches	14,000	5' wide, 4" deep at deepest point, lined to prevent seepage of petroleum products into marshland	10	140,000	Both sides of yard, design to contain spills in tanker rupture
security gates	2	steel, one at each end of yard for security	2500	5,000	locomotive driver activated?
landscape screening	12,000	perimeter landscaping continuous along entire perimeter of security fencing or blast wall	9	108,000	Both sides of yard - tall enough to screen most of wall, dense enough to screen all
water-based fire suppression	6,000	water pipeline (6"?) entire length of yard on one side, stand pipes at 500' intervals for fire department connections, water storage tank & pump for supply, power supply and emergency generator for use in power failure	90/lf	540,000	add 3500 for each FH and 15,000 for pump generator and controls
foam based fire suppression	11	11 fully equipped stations at 500' intervals	3000	33,000	foam suppression equipment stations every 500' on one side of yard
perimeter road	12,000	12' paved or gravel road both sides for security access	6	864,000	one lane for fire access and maintenance, turnouts for passing traffic.
right of way expansion	12,000	estimated 30' wide easement (or full title) each side for 6,000' length of yard, use for access road and fence/blast wall foundation	\$1/sq.ft 6,000x25x2x.5	360,000	5' for containment ditch, 15' for road, 5' for wall and foundation/buttresses, 5' for landscape screen. Purchase new RoW easement from Mulas Dairy.
Fees and permits					
Planning & design				30,000	
Civil engineers				30,000	
Structural engineers				25,000	
Fire safety design				25,000	
Landscape design				15,000	
CEQA & environmental review				640,000	
Other State agency permits				150,000	
Local permit fees				100,000	
Legal & advocacy costs				400,000	
Financing costs				600,000	
Insurance				50,000	
Contingency		20% of construction hard costs		668,600	
Total costs	Option A.	Security fence w. ditches, gates, landscaping, perimeter roads, fire protection, RoW acquisition, fees & permits		5,215,600	
	Option B.	Blast wall w. ditches, gates, landscaping, perimeter roads, fire protection, RoW acquisition, fees & permits		7,183,600	

From: [EILEEN/RICHARD PHARO](#)
To: [Leticia Rosas](#); [Norman Gilroy](#)
Subject: Tankers in Sonoma
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 4:00:16 PM

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is about the possibility of storing tankers on the railroad tracks in the Shellville area in Sonoma, California. We have been here before and had to fight hard to have them eliminated and now the issue comes back up. That shows that you're not listening to people. I believe I speak for myself, and the majority of my neighbors that we find this to be unacceptable and reprehensible. These tankers are dangerous! I have students who live literally a few feet away from these tankers. We have had numerous wildfires that have come precariously close. If a blevi is to happen, most of the neighborhoods and people living in them would be wiped out. That would also include the Shell Vista fire station.

Please google past blevis to see the impact of these disasters. Please do the right thing and do not store the tankers in this area. There are other ways to increase profits that don't put lives at risk. If something were to happen, can you imagine the liability that you would incur.? Not to mention the moral obligation you have to protect people.

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From: [EILEEN/RICHARD PHARO](#)
To: [Leticia Rosas](#); [Norman Gilroy](#)
Subject: Re: Tankers in Sonoma
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 4:01:52 PM

So sorry I was so upset by this news that I forgot to sign my letter. . My name is Eileen Pharo. My phone number is 707-888-0801 and my address is 2568 Dale Ave. in Sonoma. Thank you for your kind attention.

On 11/14/2023 4:00 PM PST EILEEN/RICHARD PHARO

<gpharofamily@comcast.net> wrote:

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is about the possibility of storing tankers on the railroad tracks in the Shellville area in Sonoma, California. We have been here before and had to fight hard to have them eliminated and now the issue comes back up. That shows that you're not listening to people. I believe I speak for myself, and the majority of my neighbors that we find this to be unacceptable and reprehensible. These tankers are dangerous!

I have students who live literally a few feet away from these tankers. We have had numerous wildfires that have come precariously close. If a blevi is to happen, most of the neighborhoods and people living in them would be wiped out. That would also include the Shell Vista fire station.

Please google past blevis to see the impact of these disasters. Please do the right thing and do not store the tankers in this area. There are other ways to increase profits that don't put lives at risk. If something were to happen, can you imagine the liability that you would incur.? Not to mention the moral obligation you have to protect people.

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From: [nacouzi nacouzi](#)
To: [Board Questions; info@bikesonoma.org](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 14: Jennings Avenue Crossing
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 1:00:06 PM

why the heck is there a prolonged delay in the jenner grade crossing? if the smart board wants the community to support tax measures, then the smart board needs to facilitate these types of actions immediately

-stepi

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From: pklonsky@sonic.net
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Nov 14th Public Comment on Agenda Item 14: Jennings Avenue Crossing
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 2:24:51 PM

I am writing, again, to urge SMART to open an at-grade crossing at Jennings Avenue in Santa Rosa as it has now been seven years since the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) formally approved the Jennings Avenue Crossing in September of 2016.

I utilize the north Santa Rosa SMART station and my "last mile" walk is actually 1 1/2 miles due to the detour around the Jennings Ave crossing location. This is true because without a bicycle/pedestrian crossing at Jennings Avenue, residents and students are required to walk 1/2 mile out of their way when trying to reach a destination on the opposite side of the tracks, including students travelling to/from school, folks walking to access SMART, work, shopping and the transit hub located at Coddington Mall.

SMART currently has 84 at-grade crossings; all eight pedestrian- bicycle crossings are equipped with bells, flashing lights, and to warn users of approaching trains. The pedestrian-bicycle crossings are the least likely of all at-grade crossings to experience an accident.

To my knowledge, there have been NO crashes at any of the SMART at-grade crossings that serve just pedestrians and cyclists rather than vehicles. The alternate locations to cross the tracks, Steele Lane and College Avenue, lack appropriate pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure. In the years since the Jennings crossing was authorized, at least ten cyclists and pedestrians have been injured in crashes on these busy streets. Walking and cycling reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve physical and mental health, reduce traffic congestion, connect communities, and offer children independence.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Klonsky
1329 Maurice Ave.
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

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From: [Michael Lipelt](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Jennings Crossing
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 3:45:26 PM

Members of the Board,

I'm a concerned citizen of Santa Rosa who would like to see an at grade Jennings Crossing to connect folks from West Santa Rosa to the Smart bike/ped trail and beyond to the 101 over-crossing to safely allow folks who choose or must walk or bike access the East side of 101 without competing with vehicles. As you know the CPUC has already signed off on the at-grade Jennings Crossing. It's the safest and most economic way to proceed in a timely manner and it's key to connect the at-grade Jennings Crossing to the greater Santa Rosa bike/ped network.

Hope to see the at-grade Jennings Crossing construction begin,

With appreciation,

Mike Lipelt

Santa Rosa

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From: [Autumn Buss](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Cc: [Eris Weaver](#)
Subject: Time for a bike/ped crossing Jennings Avenue
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 3:58:12 PM

Dear SMART Boardmembers,

I urge you to move forward with the construction of a bike/ped crossing of the SMART tracks at Jennings Avenue in Santa Rosa. Seven years have passed since the CPUC approved the Jennings crossing, and this crossing is desperately needed to safely and conveniently connect west Santa Rosa residents to destinations on the east side of the tracks. The alternative crossings at College and Steele Lane are inconvenient to access and are unsafe as they do not have appropriate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. SMART needs to support truly multimodal transportation. Please expedite this important project.

Thank you,
Autumn Buss

Autumn Buss
1259 McConnell Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
[707-623-0239](tel:707-623-0239)
autumn@ecobunny.org

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From: vin.hoagland@sonoma.edu
To: [Board Questions](#); [Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 14: Jennings Avenue Crossing
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 5:09:32 PM

I am concerned about the delay in setting up the Jennings Crossing. Pedestrians and cyclists of which I am one have a considerable detour to cross the tracks and must use relatively unsafe roads where pedestrians and bicyclists have been injured in crashes.

I frequently cross the tracks in Rohnert Park at the Copeland Creek Trail and feel very safe in doing so with the bells and gates.

I realize that there is a school near the crossing which raises safety concerns. Before and after school there are crossing guards on roadways. Why not have one at the railroad tracks?

--

Vincent Hoagland
707-584-8607

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From: [paula s](#)
To: [Board Questions; info@bikesonoma.org](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 14: Jennings Avenue Crossing
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 7:45:03 PM

Before the Smart train , I used to bike on Jennings Ave to head northeast. Allowing bikes and pedestrian crossing will connect bikes to the smart trail and offer a safe way to reach Coffey Park.

Getting people out of their cars, commuting and shopping by bike, will improve the community.

Please approve Jennings crossing.

Paula Smith
West Santa Rosa

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From: rick.luttmann@sonoma.edu
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Jennings Crossing
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 7:56:50 PM

Dear SMART Board Members: I understand that the Jennings Crossing question is back on your agenda for tomorrow's meeting.

I don't live in Santa Rosa, so I'm essentially an interested bystander here. But I strongly support SMART and wish it well in succeeding far into the future. That means you must get voters to support your tax extension measure when it comes up. Which means you cannot afford to offend the voters in the region's largest city. The Jennings Crossing is widely supported in Santa Rosa, and there is much distrust and disgruntlement at the SMART Board's refusal to accommodate their concerns.

There are pedestrian crossings up and down the system. There are two in my neighborhood, just south of the RP station. I have seen nothing to indicate that these or any others already on the system are a problem. And I have seen nothing to suggest that Jennings would be unusually different. Why the reluctance, SMARTees?

In fact, if Jennings is unusual in any way, it's the fact that to avoid crossing the track there, legally it is necessary to go north go Guerneville Rd or south to College Ave -- both of which are busy high-speed roads where no cyclist or pedestrian is any safer than they would be crossing at a well-protected signalized crossing.

All I've heard as a "reason" for not building a crossing at Jennings is "If ONE child is killed there, " But realistically in an imperfect world certainty cannot be achieved. There will be accidents, there will be deaths. There have been some already. Earlier this year a woman was killed by one of your trains at a grade-crossing in Novato. I didn't see you wringing your hands and saying "we must stop the trains".

I hope you will do the right thing!

-- Rick Luttmann, PhD, Rohnert Park

STAY WOKE!! -- Lead Belly

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From: [ankichu](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Jennings Crossing
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 7:39:15 AM

Hello! I'm writing to offer my comments on the Jennings Crossing in advance of the 11/15/23 SMART board meeting.

I've lived in the Jennings Avenue neighborhood for nearly 27 years, and used to cross over the tracks regularly to go to the bank or the library or the mall, or the post office, or just to walk. People in this neighborhood love to walk! The crossing let us walk to places we now must drive to. It let kids on the east side of the tracks walk to the school on the west side. It would be so great if we could have that back again.

Also, isn't one of the purposes of SMART to have people use their cars *less*? Opening up the crossing would reinforce that message, because we would in fact be using our cars less. "So what?" you may ask. "There aren't enough of you to make a difference." But—baby steps! And—it would demonstrate SMART's commitment to serving the community.

And don't you want people to use SMART *more*? Well, the crossing would create a delightful route to the SMART station on Guerneville Road because it would intersect with the bike/walking path next to the tracks (great job there, by the way!) and people could avoid slogging along Dutton Avenue.

So please help make Jennings Crossing happen. It would mean a lot to us.

Thanks for listening,

A.C. Hollinger

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From: [harry boatright](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Cc: info@bikesonoma.org
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 14: Jennings Avenue Crossing
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 7:57:27 AM

- Board Members:
-
- It has now been SEVEN YEARS since the California Public Utilities Commission formally approved the Jennings Avenue Crossing in September of 2016.
- Without a bicycle/pedestrian crossing at Jennings Avenue, residents and students are required to walk ½ mile out of their way when trying to reach a destination on the opposite side of the tracks, including students travelling to/from school, folks walking to access SMART, work, shopping and the transit hub located at Coddington Mall.
- SMART currently has 84 at-grade crossings; all eight pedestrian- bicycle crossings are equipped with bells, flashing lights, and to warn users of approaching trains. The pedestrian-bicycle crossings are the least likely of all at-grade crossings to experience an accident. To our knowledge, there have been NO crashes at any of the SMART at-grade crossings that serve just pedestrians and cyclists rather than vehicles.
- The alternate locations to cross the tracks, Steele Lane and College Avenue, lack appropriate pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure. In the years since the Jennings crossing was authorized, at least ten cyclists and pedestrians have been injured in crashes on these busy streets.
- Walking and cycling reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve physical and mental health, reduce traffic congestion, connect communities, and offer children independence

Common sense and fairness. Lets do it ! (btw I am a SMART rider)

Harry Boatright
Cotati

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From: [Richard Heinberg](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Cc: [Janet Barocco](#)
Subject: Board Meeting: At-Grade Jennings Crossing
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 9:26:57 AM

To: SMART Board

Re: At-grade Jennings rail crossing

November 14, 2023

Greetings:

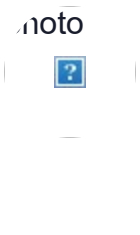
I'm delighted to know that the Board will be revisiting the Jennings rail crossing at its meeting November 15. Our Jennings neighborhood has worked for years to persuade SMART of the safety and usefulness of an at-grade Jennings crossing. The city has argued for it. The CPUC has approved it. Sadly, school children and other pedestrians and bicyclists must still take a long and dangerous detour to Guerneville Road or College Avenue. The city needs east-west connectivity, which Highway 101 and the rail line have compromised. The Jennings crossing would be a strategic connective path for school children, shoppers, hikers, and bicyclists—who used an informal crossing at that location for decades. Please build this crossing.

Sincerely,

Richard Heinberg

Jennings Avenue homeowner

--

 **Richard Heinberg**
Senior Fellow, Post Carbon Institute
[he/his](#) | [+1 \(541\) 566-8700](#)
richard@postcarbon.org
postcarbon.org | resilience.org

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From: [AL Wellman](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Jennings Avenue crossing in Santa Rosa
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 1:45:22 PM

I strongly urge SMART to approve reconnection of Jennings Avenue as an at-grade crossing of the SMART tracks for bicycles and pedestrians (but not motor vehicles.) I walked to work for twenty years crossing the tracks at this location. Straight track in both directions provides excellent visibility for approaching trains. Although there would be a limited duration of visibility by fast-moving eastbound cyclists, appropriately-designed train-actuated pedestrian/cyclist gates with bypass fencing would require cyclists to stop during periods of danger.

At present motor vehicle speed limits, this crossing is essential for safe access to SMART's Santa Rosa North station by the population residing or working between Guerneville Road and College Avenue west to Fulton Road, and will be used by passengers residing or working on the west side of the tracks north of Guerneville Road. There is an element of risk for any grade crossing, but avoidance of this risk will sacrifice these potential passengers, just as avoidance of all risk would require abandonment of train service.

Albert Wellman, PE

Santa Rosa

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From: [Eris Weaver](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 14: Jennings Avenue Crossing
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 4:16:55 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Dear General Manager and members of the Board:

It has now been SEVEN YEARS since the California Public Utilities Commission formally approved the Jennings Avenue Crossing in September of 2016.

SCBC has been a supporter of this crossing from the beginning. An at-grade crossing at Jennings Avenue will improve public safety and provide a convenient way for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the SMART tracks. Without a bicycle/pedestrian crossing at Jennings Avenue, residents and students are required to walk ½ mile out of their way when trying to reach a destination on the opposite side of the tracks, including elementary age students travelling to/from school. The alternate locations to cross the tracks, Steele Lane and College Avenue, lack appropriate pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure. In the years since the Jennings crossing was authorized, at least ten cyclists and pedestrians have been injured in crashes on these busy streets. This situation presents a major deterrent to walking and biking for local trips. The people who stand to benefit most from the at-grade crossing include children walking to Helen Lehman Elementary School, as well as people walking to access SMART, work, shopping and the transit hub located at Coddington Mall. It would also benefit students traveling to a number of other school sites in the vicinity, including Piner High School, Comstock Middle School, and Cesar Chavez Elementary School.

Public support for construction of the at-grade crossing was confirmed during the community meeting held at Helen Lehman School in March of this year.

This crossing is a vital link in our active transportation network. Please allow it to move forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eris Weaver



Eris Weaver, Executive Director
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
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707-545-0153 office • 707-338-8589 cell
www.bikesonoma.org



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From: jjames@sonic.net
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Comments for SMART Board Meeting Nov 15, 2023
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 4:24:35 PM

Comments for SMART Board of Directors Meeting November 15, 2023
Re Closed Session, Item 14.3)

Chair and Members of the SMART Board of Directors:

It is my understanding that the City of Santa Rosa and SMART are close to reaching agreement on provisions for moving forward with construction and re-opening of the CPUC-approved at-grade rail crossing at Jennings Avenue in Santa Rosa. I certainly applaud that!

Meanwhile, I hope that SMART will do everything possible to support the City's application to the CPUC for an extension of its approval of the crossing.

Thank you.

Johanna James,

Longtime resident of the Jennings Neighborhood

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From: [Steve Birdlebough](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Comment on Closed Session (Jennings Crossing)
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 4:58:34 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

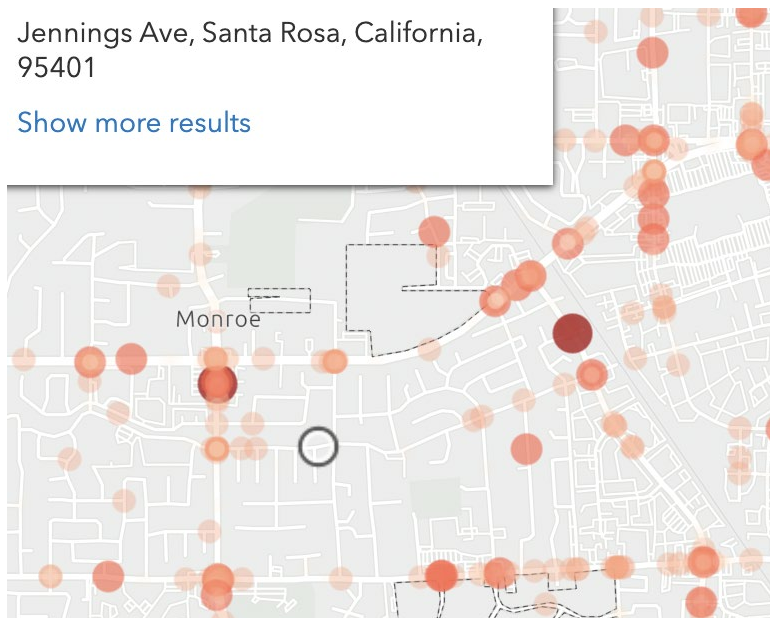
We are glad to hear that SMART and the City of Santa Rosa are working to construct the Jennings Avenue at-grade crossing. This project is all about establishing a safe west-east bike boulevard that will take cyclists and pedestrians off dangerous thoroughfares with fast-moving traffic.

The Sonoma County Vision Zero map shows about 25 collisions on College Ave. and Guerneville Rd., many of them serious. Jennings Avenue is much more safe.

Steve Birdlebough.

707-576-6632

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3199b07e942445068213291c6acbc4f0>



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From: [Janet Barocco](#)
To: [Board Questions](#)
Subject: Jennings Crossing
Date: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 4:52:02 PM

To: SMART BOARD
Re: Jennings Crossing

SMART BOARD members,

For nearly a decade, we pedestrians, wheelchair users, parents with strollers, dog walkers, and cyclists have been required to take the “Jennings detour” along highly trafficked N. Dutton and Guerneville Road or to walk an even longer distance to cross at West College, simply to access services and businesses on either side of the tracks.

If you are not familiar with our area, you may not be aware of how much riskier it is, and how much longer it takes, to take the detour, than it would be to cross at a safe, at-grade rail crossing complete with gates, signals, and a clear line of sight at Jennings.

The current detour is not only riskier for cyclists and pedestrians, but it also adds an additional 20 to 30 minutes to what used to be a convenient, car-free route over the tracks. I know residents residing in the east-side apartments who now must drive their kids to school or to the health clinics or Safeway, UPS, and Dollar Drug on the west side of the tracks.

While the concern about young people crossing the tracks is valid, we must be realistic about the risk. For example, kids now must cross at the Guerneville Road pedestrian crossing, with heavy car traffic present, in order to reach school. Wouldn't it be better if they could learn to use a car-free, at-grade rail crossing? Other similar crossings exist in Sonoma County, and children have learned to use those. Also, there is an option to have crossing guards assist during peak school hours. A pedestrian/bike bridge over Hwy 101 will be built in a couple of years. Jennings Avenue is directly in line with it, and an at-grade crossing there would be an important link for cyclists and pedestrians. Building the at-grade crossing at Jennings is also included in our City's climate plans.

There are many good reasons to build the at-grade crossing at Jennings. I urge you to approve the construction.

Sincerely,

Janet Barocco
1604 Jennings Avenue
Santa Rosa CA

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