

MONTEREY COUNTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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MEMORANDUM

Date: 7/9/2020

To: Sarah Hardgrave, Policy Analyst, Office of Supervisor Mary L. Adams, District 5

From: Shandy Carroll, Management Analyst III, RMA

Subject: Update to District 5 regarding Carmel Lagoon and Carmel River projects

cc: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director
Shawne E. Ellerbee, RMA Deputy of Director of Administrative Services
Melanie Beretti, RMA Property Administration/Special Programs Manager

The following is an update regarding projects in Carmel Lagoon and River. It is our intention to provide regular updates to your office that you can use for distribution to constituents impacted by the Carmel River and Lagoon.

1. Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier (EPB), Scenic Road Protection structure (SRPS) and Interim Sandbar Management Plan (IMSP) Project:

Interim (Seasonal) Sandbar Management – The sandbar has mostly closed naturally between the lagoon and the ocean, except at the highest tide and wave-state.

Temporary Flood Management – No Activity

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - In June, Denise Duffy & Associates (DD&A) contracted with subconsultants who will conduct technical studies including: 1) the impacts of different wall options on the beach morphology, 2) natural stream alignment and location of breach, and 3) a sediment transport analysis. These technical studies will begin in summer 2020. The County held a kickoff meeting with sub-consultants on June 26th, 2020.

Technical Advisory Committee – DD&A and County staff have compiled a list of potential technical advisory committee members. In June, the County drafted an interested letter to solicit interest among the potential committee members to ascertain interest and availability to serve on the TAC. The letter will be sent in July. County anticipates selecting TAC members by the end of July 2020 and the first TAC meeting is planned in early August 2020.

Community and SRPS Stakeholder Outreach – Community meetings will be held in the late summer of 2020 to involve the community in planned next steps. Interested community members will be invited to join a Stakeholder Committee that will meet quarterly to review technical studies disseminated from the Technical Advisory Committee. An inter-agency meeting will be held in summer 2020 to discuss various agency needs from the project.

State Parks Collaboration – At this time staff are seeking a letter from California State Parks stating the of good faith willingness to work collaboratively with the County to consider a future possible mid-slope SRPS, pending environmental review and project approval. Staff have met with State Parks to discuss ongoing coordination between County and State Parks.

2. Carmel River (CRFREE)

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) – The Project Certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) is available at: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=87783>.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) There has been a change in Lead Agency for NEPA due to losing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding expiring and subsequent consideration of funding for the Project by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Staff are working to orchestrate a smooth transition between USFWS and FEMA to complete NEPA review, and are working in coordination with Supervisor Adam’s office and Congressman Panetta’s office to help facilitate a meeting with the agencies and project team (County, Big Sur Land Trust, DD&A). A draft memo summarizing the NEPA policy issue and requesting assistance from the Congressman will be sent in July. Completing the NEPA review for the Project is an important, time sensitive step to enable the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to complete its review of the Final Project Report.

Pending Issues – The Board will consider approving the CRFREE Project at a later date, pending resolution of the following:

Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) – The County and CAWD are working to develop an agreement outlining how the agencies will work cooperatively toward the funding and implementation of both the CRFREE Project and CAWD’s Pipeline Undergrounding project. Anticipated next steps are to complete the agreement.

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District’s (MPRPD) – The County and its consultant team finalized a technical memo addressing questions from MPRPD and a private party regarding Riverfield well construction logistics and potential impacts of the CRFREE Project. The County and MPRPD plan to meet in July 2020 to discuss comments/questions received by the private party and to present the County’s position and options for construction in order to reach an agreement.

All Party MOU for Construction Phase – The current MOU is between the County of Monterey, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Big Sur Land Trust, for the purpose of coordinating planning activity for the proposed Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project. The All-Party MOU is being modified to include the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (pending final resolve regarding Riverfield well – see above) and to clarify roles and responsibilities as the project moves from the planning stage into the construction phase. Anticipated next steps are to finish the draft MOU and present the draft MOU to the respective partners’ governing bodies and the Board of Supervisors for approval. Staff anticipates completing the draft MOU late summer 2020.

Construction - The current implementation schedule anticipates construction to begin in the second half of 2022. Construction will last approximately twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. The Project will work with Caltrans, community members, event organizers and other stakeholders to minimize impacts or disruptions along Highway 1 during construction.

Grant funding – In June, the County coordinated a response to the California Department of Emergency Services (CalOES/FEMA) regarding concern that there could be a duplication of Federal funds. The response included a letter from Caltrans stating that while the CRFREE project affects the right-of-way for State Highway 1, it is not a Caltrans project, therefore no Federal-Aid Highway funding has been programmed for that work. Letters of support for the project were sent from Supervisor Adams and Congressman Panetta.