

MONTEREY COUNTY
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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HOUSING, PLANNING, BUILDING, ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 12, 2021

To: Office of Supervisor Mary L. Adams, District 5

From: Shandy Carroll, Management Analyst III, HCD *SBC*

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

cc: Melanie Beretti, HCD Services Manager

The following is an update regarding Projects and activities in the Carmel Lagoon and lower Carmel River area for the Monterey County Supervisorial District 5 office to share with constituents. It covers work completed between September 28, 2021, and November 3, 2021, and work planned for the near future. Prior updates can be found at <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-housing-community-development/planning-services/carmel-river-and-lagoon-project-updates>

1. Carmel Lagoon and River Beach Sandbar Seasonal Management Activities:

Public Works, Facilities and Parks Department (PWFP) staff are prepared to manage the Carmel River Beach sandbar if triggering conditions occur. Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) staff have submitted permits to the State Agencies that permit the sandbar management activities and are anticipated to be issued by mid-November. Federal permits are currently active.

PWFP and HCD staff held a community meeting October 20th to review the annual flood risk reduction activities for this coming season. Below are key activities, status and update related to sandbar management activities.

Project Component	Status	Update
Upcoming meetings	Planned: December 13, 2021 at 3 pm	County Board of Supervisor’s Capital Improvement Committee to receive a Carmel Lagoon update. Meeting agenda and zoom information will be posted on December 6 th . https://monterey.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx
Interim (Seasonal) Sandbar Management	In progress: October - March	Permits from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board (RWQB) are pending and expect to be complete by mid-November.

Temporary Flood Management	In progress	The temporary sandbag wall construction began November 8, 2021. It will take approximately two weeks to complete.
Monitoring	In progress – see links	Carmel Lagoon Water Levels Current and forecasted flow at Robles Del Rio Bridge, Carmel River Wave height at Carmel River Beach

2. Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier (EPB), Scenic Road Protection structure (SRPS) and Interim Sandbar Management Plan (ISMP) Project (REF 120051):

The 2016 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Carmel Lagoon Ecosystem Protective Barrier (EPB), Scenic Road Protection structure (SRPS) and Interim Sandbar Management Plan (ISMP) Project is located at the below link: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects/carmel-lagoon-ecosystem-protective-barrier-and-scenic-road-protective-barrier-systems>

Project Component	Status	Update
Upcoming Community meetings	Preliminary planning Planned: December 13, 2021 at 3 pm	A community outreach meeting will be held in early 2022 to review the updated 30% SRPS Design plans. County Board of Supervisor’s Capital Improvement Committee to receive a Carmel Lagoon update. Meeting agenda and zoom information will be posted on December 6 th . https://monterey.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx
Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	Draft revision	A recirculated Draft EIR will be ready for public comment in early 2022.
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Ongoing	The TAC will continue to provide independent review of technical documents drafted by County consultants.
Technical Studies	Final Drafts	Three primary technical studies are being prepared. The final drafts of the technical studies are on target to be completed in the fall of 2021.
SRPS 30% Design	Pending Technical Studies	Following the completion of the technical studies, the existing preliminary SRPS 30% design described in the Draft EIR will be updated to reflect the new information. The design will include the location, dimensions, type of wall, and will consider sea level rise and identify adaptive measures. A visual rendering of preliminary designs will be released with the re-circulated DEIR. All studies will be provided to the Technical Advisory Committee, regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and the community for review and input.

3. Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement (CRFREE) Project

The CRFREE Project Certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) is available at:

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/housing-community-development/planning-services/current-major-projects/carmel-river-free>

Project Component	Status	Update
Project Approval	Complete	The CRFREE Project and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) was approved by the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors June 15, 2021.
National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)	In progress	The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues its NEPA analysis of the Project as part of its consideration of the \$22.9 million grant funds proposed for the CRFREE project, inclusive of funding for the Carmel Area Wastewater District's (CAWD) project to underground its force main and sewer outfall pipes spanning the south arm of the Lagoon.
Construction and permitting	In progress	The current implementation schedule anticipates construction to begin in early 2024. Construction will last approximately twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. Big Sur Land Trust and County Staff are working with the consultants to coordinate utility relocation in the Project area. Initial meetings have been held with Caltrans, CalAm, and ATT.
Construction Phase MOU	In progress	The All-Party MOU for the construction phase is under review by the parties and will be considered for approval in early 2022.
Grant Funding	Ongoing	CRFREE is estimated to cost approximately \$42 million. Approximately \$11 million in grant funds have been awarded, with a further \$31 million applied for and pending. The State of California has approved the award of a \$5,147,149 grant from the Department of Water Resources Coastal Watershed Risk Reduction Program. The California State Coastal Conservancy will award the amount of \$4.25 million, pending acceptance of the award by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors. The FEMA/CalOES grant is pending following environmental review. Staff submitted an increase in grant 'ask', increasing the amount from \$22.9 million to \$25.1 million.