

Attachment A

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CARMEL RIVER FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

CRFREE PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will improve flood control and restore native riparian, floodplain habitat, and hydrologic function of a portion of the lower floodplain along the Carmel River. The proposed Project consists of two (2) interdependent components: Floodplain Restoration and Causeway.

Floodplain Restoration

This component consists of removal of approximately 1,470 linear feet of non-structural earthen levees on the south side of the Carmel River channel, grading on approximately 100 acres to restore the site's ecological function as a floodplain, grading to elevate approximately 23 acres of existing farmland above the 100-year floodplain to create an agricultural preserve, and implementation of an ongoing Restoration Management Plan (RMP).

Causeway

This component consists of replacing a portion of the State Route (SR) 1 roadway embankment with a 360-foot-long causeway section to accommodate floodflows that enter the south overbank area as a function of the removal of portions of the levees as described above and to restore hydrologic connectivity between the Project site and Carmel Lagoon. The Project would result in the reconnection and restoration of approximately 100 acres of historic floodplain.

CEQA

The County is the Lead Agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified by the Board of Supervisors in January 2020.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The updated implementation schedule anticipates construction start in the second half of 2021. The Construction phase will last approximately twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months. The California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) review process for the Causeway Component and ROW work is anticipated to present the most significant impact to Project timelines.

The Project has experienced significant delay due to extensive, ongoing coordination with adjacent landowners and regulatory agencies. Additional funding is needed to allow for expansion of existing consulting services and new services essential to complete the Project's Final Design and Construction.

PROJECT COSTS/FINANCING

Total Project costs, including soft costs (e.g., engineering, financing, and legal fees; other pre- and post-construction expenses) are estimated at \$37.5 million. County Project expenditures, to date, total \$1,199,919, of which \$153,919 was funded by the County General Fund and \$1,046,000 by grant funding. The Resource Management Agency Facility Master Plan Projects Fund, Fund 404, Appropriation Unit RMA015, as part of its FY 2019-20 Adopted Budget included an augmentation of \$21,132 to cover costs associated with Project permitting. RMA staff time for project management and preconstruction activities is funded as part of FY 2019-20 RMA Adopted Budget, Fund 001, Appropriation Unit RMA013.

Grant Funds

To date, Project cosponsors, the County of Monterey and Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT), have secured over \$14 million in grant funds toward the Project; approximately \$9.25 million remain active and unspent. The County was recently notified of a \$300,243 planning grant award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). NFWF Grant Award 0318.19.065984 is scheduled for Board of Supervisors' consideration for approval on May 19, 2020.

The County submitted two grant applications totaling \$25.4 million (toward the \$23.5 million gap): 1) a \$2.5 million grant award from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) was approved by the WCB Board of Directors on February 26, 2020, and County is pending a Notice to Proceed from WCB, and 2) \$22.9 million for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding is still pending award. Staff included \$4.6 million for undergrounding of Carmel Area Wastewater District's (CAWD's) outfall and sewer force main pipelines over the south arm of the Lagoon as part of the HMGP application. Funding estimates include all Project elements, including protection of the existing Riverfield Well on Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District property.

If any additional grants are awarded, RMA will return to Budget Committee and Board of Supervisors for consideration of approval of the grant agreements and increasing fiscal year appropriations.