



COUNTY OF VENTURA

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January 23, 2024

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Recommendation to Approve Funding for a Portion of a Pilot Channel Project Over Coyote Creek at Camp Chaffee Road in a One-Time Contribution Amount of \$25,000 (4/5 Vote Required).

Dear Board Members,

Recommendation:

It is recommended that our Board approve and authorize a one-time contribution of \$25,000 to fund the remaining portion of \$94,000 required from local property owners to move forward with a \$1.5 million dollar Pilot Channel Project to abate flooding over Camp Chaffee Road to provide secondary access, and authorize the Auditor-Controller to process the necessary budget transactions as follows (4/5th vote required):

Fund G001 General Fund			
INCREASE	1050	Other Financing Uses	\$25,000
DECREASE	G001	General Fund – Fund Balance Assigned to Program Mitigation	\$25,000
Fund S710 Watershed Protection District Zone 1			
INCREASE	4210-4213	Services & Supplies	\$25,000
INCREASE	4210-4213	Other Financing Sources	\$25,000

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

Mandatory: No
Source of Funding: General Fund
Funding Match Required: None
Impact on Other County Departments: None

Summary of Revenues and Costs:

	FY 2023-24
Revenues:	\$0
Costs:	
Direct	\$25,000
Indirect-Dept	\$0
Indirect-County CAP	\$0
Total Cost	\$25,000
Net County Cost	\$25,000
Recovered Indirect Costs	\$0

Background:

The Foster Park Community was originally established as a seasonal hunting and fishing community in 1925. Over time, the community became a permanent residential community in a rural setting served by two roads – Skyhigh Drive and Camp Chaffee Road. Skyhigh Drive is a privately maintained road served by a County Service Area (CSA-3). Camp Chaffee Road is a County maintained road via easement over private property and was entered into the County's maintained road network in 1947.

Camp Chaffee Road is a dry weather crossing over Coyote Creek that has historically succumbed to seasonal flooding. However, the storms of January 2023 brought atmospheric rivers and rainfall amounts that the Foster Park community hadn't experienced. On January 5, 2023, the storm total at Casitas Dam was 2.95 inches and Matilija Canyon was 5.65 inches. On January 9, Casitas Dam received 1.29 inches prior to 7:00am with 0.22 inches in 1 hour between 6:00 and 7:00am. Rain from 7:00am to 7:00pm at Casitas Dam was 6.46 inches. The peak rainfall was 0.80 inches between 4:00pm and 5:00pm.

The dry weather crossing was inundated with approximately five feet of water, mud, and debris from Coyote Creek, preventing vehicular access over Camp Chaffee Road. County Public Works Roads and Transportation attempted to clear the road 3 times over the past year, but the road remains unpassable due to returning water, mud, and debris from upstream.

Discussion:

The District 1 office has worked hard to explore the options over the years to address the reoccurring flooding and maintain secondary access to the Foster Park community. After the January 2023 storm, the community expressed interest in finding a more permanent solution to help maintain the secondary access in the presence of unpredictable weather events and emergency access. The County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection Division applied for a grant from NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) to fund the installation of a 3,300 feet long earthen channel within Coyote Creek to abate the reoccurrence of flooding. The County was awarded the \$1.5 million grant for the project, which required a portion of which (\$94,000) to be funded by private property owners.

The Foster Park community immediately rallied with fundraising activities including restaurant fundraisers, multiple grant applications in partnership with the Ventura County Community Foundation, and even a concert at Libbey Bowl entitled "Let It Flow"¹. As of December 14, 2023, the community has raised \$69,503.73 of the \$94,000 required to move forward with the NRCS funded project.

There is strong desire to have the pilot channel project installed during Summer 2024 ahead of the next Winter season to provide two vehicular access routes to the Foster Park community. Approval of the \$25,000 serves a public purpose because the project will also benefit Camp Chaffee Road, a County maintained road, by potentially reducing the frequency of the road flooding in future storms. County Public Works staff is aware of this timeline and has forecasted construction schedules to accommodate this request.

While the County is assisting with the construction of the Pilot Channel Project, the channel will need to be maintained by the adjacent private property owners to ensure its functionality in perpetuity.

¹ https://www.ojaivalleynews.com/news/ojai-lets-love-for-neighbors-flow/article_151995a8-698f-11ee-87ad-b34c82a302aa.html

The community may create an Assessment District, Homeowners Association or create a private agreement between themselves to ensure all applicable property owners maintain their fair share of the channel. It should be underscored that the County will not maintain the channel after installation and its success is dependent on private party maintenance. The County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection Division will continue to be a public resource for permitting information as applicable for such private maintenance requirements.

The Foster Park community has made a significant impression on me byway of their dedication and commitment to their grassroots funding efforts. Please join me in supporting their efforts by approving the one-time contribution of \$25,000 for this much-needed Pilot Channel Project for the benefit of the Foster Park Community, with the added public purpose benefit to the County maintained road that provides secondary emergency access.

This letter has been reviewed by Public Works, County Counsel, Auditor-Controller, and the County Executive Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt LaVere", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matt LaVere
District 1, Supervisor

Attachment A – Pilot Channel Project Schematic Plan Sheet