

Central Services
Joan Araujo, Director

Engineering Services
Vacant, Director

Roads & Transportation
Anitha Balan, Director

Water & Sanitation
Vacant, Director

Watershed Protection
Jeff Palmer, Director

July 23, 2024

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

Subject: Approval of the Plans and Specifications for the Santa Paula Creek 2024 Streambank Stabilization Project – located in Santa Paula, CA ; Authorization for the Public Works Agency Director or His Designee to Approve Addenda, to Waive Minor Irregularities in the Bid, to Award the Contract to the Lowest Responsive, Responsible Bidder provided that the Low Bid Does not Exceed the Engineer’s Estimate of \$3,390,000 by more than 20%, and to Execute a Contract With That Bidder for the Santa Paula Creek 2024 Streambank Stabilization Project, Find Project Statutorily Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); Specification No. WP25-02, Project No. P6082191; Supervisorial District Nos. 1 & 2. Recommendation No. 5 (REQUIRES 4/5THS VOTE).

Recommendations:

1. Approve the plans and specifications including addenda for the construction of the Santa Paula Creek 2024 Streambank Stabilization Project – located in Santa Paula, CA (Exhibits 1 and 2), Specification No. WP25-02, Project No. P6082191;
2. Authorize the Public Works Agency (PWA) Director or his designee to issue and approve addenda which clarify ambiguities, or correct errors in the plans and specifications;
3. Authorize the PWA Director or his designee to waive any minor irregularities in the bids;
4. Authorize the PWA Director or his designee to award a contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder provided the low bid does not exceed the Engineer’s estimate of \$3,390,000 by more than 20%, and to execute subject contract after review and approval as to form by County Counsel;
5. Find that the Santa Paula Creek 2024 Streambank Stabilization project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under



CEQA Section 15269 (a) and (c), Emergency Projects, approve the project and CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE), and authorize the Public Works Director, or his designee, to sign and file the NOE with the County Clerk.

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

Mandatory: No
 Source of Funding: 75% NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) Funding
 Funding Match Required: 25% Zone 2 Funding
 Impact on Other Department(s): None

Summary of Revenue and Total Costs:

		<u>FY 2024-25</u>		<u>FY 2025-26</u>
Revenue:	\$	3,596,907	\$	0
Costs:				
Direct	\$	4,460,192	\$	0
Indirect – Agency/Dept.	\$	14,248	\$	0
Indirect – County CAP	\$	626	\$	0
Total Costs	\$	4,475,066	\$	0
Net Costs	\$	878,159	\$	0
Recovered Indirect Costs	\$	0	\$	0

Current FY Budget Projection:

Current FY 2024-25 Budget Projection for Watershed Protection District Zone 2 - Unit 4221				
	Adopted Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$ 3,602,600	\$ 3,602,600	\$ 3,602,600	\$0
Revenue	\$17,693,500	\$17,693,500	\$17,693,500	\$0
Net Cost	(\$14,090,900)	(\$14,090,900)	(\$14,090,900)	\$0

Sufficient appropriations and revenue are included in the FY 2024-25 Zone 2 Adopted Budgets.

Discussion:

The project is located along Santa Paula Creek in Ventura County, approximately 2.2 miles from the confluence between Santa Paula Creek and the Santa Clara River, near downtown Santa Paula (See Exhibits 1 and 2). Santa Paula Creek is located east of State Route 150. The upstream area of the project site is near Mupu Elementary School (4410 North Ojai Road, Santa Paula, 93060) and the downstream area is near the intersection



of Birch Street and Magnolia Drive. To the west of Santa Paula Creek is a residential neighborhood and to the east is mostly agricultural land. The length of the project is approximately 2,850 feet (Exhibit 2).

From December 2004 through January 2005, damaging storms caused flooding and mass erosion along the east and west banks of Santa Paula Creek. Immediate response to the floods began with the activities of the Public Works Agency (PWA), the Sheriff's Department, and others, who rapidly assessed the situation and directed emergency response activities to residents threatened by flood waters. Damage in the project reach included loss of land, agricultural and infrastructure damage, and several evacuated homes. The banks of the creek closely approached at least 11 residences and Mupu Elementary School. Many homes were at risk of being "red tagged" (mandatory evacuation) if further bank loss occurred. The Watershed Protection District (District) received federal assistance and funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) to perform project activities. To protect the damaged banks, the District moved sediment from the center of the stream to the eroded banks to create a 3H:1V slope. In addition to moving sediment, sections of a pilot channel were created to increase the distance between the active flow channel and the outer banks. To further protect the project area from bank erosion, 24 spur dikes (12 pairs) consisting of large rocks in a three-dimensional trapezoidal shape were constructed at specific intervals along the channel in the 2007-2008 time frame with NRCS EWPP funds. The spur dikes extended from the existing vertical banks to the bank of the centralized low-flow channel. This provided capacity up to a 10-year flood event in the channel between the spur dikes and prevented a wide meandering of the creek.

The January and February 2023 storms produced heavy rainfall and caused major damage to Santa Paula Creek. Due to the storm intensities, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency on January 4, 2023, and again on June 16, 2023. President Biden declared a Major Disaster on January 15, 2023, and April 3, 2023, and a State of Emergency on March 10, 2023. As a result of the storms, agricultural land along the east bank, and residential properties along the west bank of Santa Paula Creek were damaged with one structure being red tagged. The storms damaged and destroyed ten of the spur dikes and caused substantial erosion. The west bank was eroded as much as 130 feet from the pre-storm conditions.

Between October and December 2023, the District conducted emergency activities under USACE Regional General Permit 63 to address the storm damage and bank erosion. While working in the dry area of the creek, the District re-established approximately 1,200 linear feet of the meandering low flow channel into a pilot channel, similar to what had originally existed between the spur dikes. This pilot channel was extended upstream and connected to the existing low flow channel to provide a seamless transition for flow and aquatic species. The District removed approximately 40,000 cubic yards of alluvium accumulated on approximately eight acres of the west terrace. The removed material was used to reinforce the severely eroded west embankment. While the emergency work in



late 2023 was beneficial by redirecting the low flow channel away from the surrounding homes and agricultural lands and restoring the banks, the storms in early 2024 resulted in additional meandering. This caused additional bank erosion in the absence of the spur dikes. Thus, restoring the spur dikes to reduce the channel meandering will provide protection for the surrounding properties for future lower volume storm events.

To further repair the damaged banks and to reduce risks to homes from future storm damage, the project will consist of replacing ten spur dikes along Santa Paula Creek and realigning the channel. The project work will include staging areas, temporary access ramps into the channel, temporary crossings with culverts over water with the capacity for heavy equipment, diverting some sections of the existing low flow channel to realign the surface flows away from the work area, installing spur dikes, and revegetating the impacted areas with native alluvial scrub and riparian species. The project will likely occur in three phases (schedules) to comply with permitting, time constraints, and funding.

The District is working in collaboration with the NRCS. Funding is available for the proposed improvements through the NRCS EWPP. NRCS administers the EWPP which responds to emergencies created by natural disasters. The EWPP is a recovery effort aimed at relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural disasters. Threats that the EWPP addresses are termed watershed impairments. NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the eligible construction cost of emergency measures. The District was provided with a Notice of Award on February 27, 2024.

The NRCS program also requires a local match with the remaining 25 percent, approximately \$888,125. For the remaining 25%, Zone 2 funds will be used. The California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) has a program that will fund 75% of the remaining local 25% cost share for this project. CalOES funding is only available at project completion. The District intends to apply to CalOES for reimbursement once the project has been completed and closed out by NRCS.

The Project is currently out for bid. Bid opening is scheduled for September 5, 2024. Due to the Board's scheduled dark period during August and the need to begin construction as soon as possible, your Board is being requested to authorize the PWA Director or his designee to approve addenda, to waive minor irregularities in the bid, to award the contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder provided that the low bid does not exceed the Engineer's Estimate of \$3,552,500 by more than 20%, and to execute a contract with that bidder for the Project.

Regulatory permitting for the project is in progress and includes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Regional Water Quality Control Board. The project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15269 (a) and (c), Emergency Projects. The NOE will be filed after your Board's approval (see Exhibit 6).

The estimated total project costs are as follows:



Preliminary Engineering:	\$ 172,800*
Construction Contract:	\$ 3,390,000
Construction Engineering:	\$ 355,250
Right of Way:	\$ 15,000
Contingencies:	<u>\$ 678,000</u>
Total	\$ 4,611,050

*\$135,984 in Preliminary Engineering was incurred in the previous fiscal year.

Strategic Plan:

This item contributes to the Board of Supervisors (Board's) 2024-2027 strategic priority to provide:

- III. Reliable infrastructure and sustainability through
 - 3. Investing in sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, and preservation of our natural resources.

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel. The Contract is on a standard form previously reviewed by County Counsel.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact the undersigned at 654-2040.

Sincerely,



Jeff Palmer, P.E.
Director
Watershed Protection District

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 2 – Location Map
- Exhibit 3 – Draft Plans and Specifications
- Exhibit 4 – CEQA NOE

