

**San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority**

**May 28, 2009 Board Meeting**

**Agenda Item 7**

**Informational Items**

a) Highway 101 Bridge Project Update

Over the past several months, JPA staff has been in communications with Caltrans staff in an effort to coordinate proposed projects of both agencies at the US Highway 101 crossing over San Francisquito Creek. As the JPA is considering options to improve floodwater conveyance under the 101 crossing, Caltrans is in the planning stages to replace the 101 span over the creek in 2012 to update it and expand its width to improve traffic flow.

Since the April 23<sup>rd</sup> JPA Board meeting when this proposed project was discussed, the following has occurred:

- Caltrans has stated that they are in agreement with the completed hydraulic model produced by the consultant to the Army Corps of Engineers, which states that floodwater capacity at and around U.S. 101 is the lowest in the system.
- Caltrans has confirmed their agreement in principle to include a 4<sup>th</sup> barrel to increase flow capacity under the freeway in their design and construction of the new crossing, and has confirmed that increasing capacity under West Bayshore Road is a State responsibility.
- Caltrans believes that adding a 4<sup>th</sup> barrel does not represent a significant environmental impact and therefore would not alter their planned Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project.
- The Santa Clara Valley Water District has begun providing technical assistance to JPA staff on the project's design and environmental review issues.

Adding additional flow capacity at the Highway 101 crossing will be a key component of the overall flood protection plans between Middlefield Road and San Francisco Bay. All of the alternatives for downstream flood protection to be presented during the next agenda item assume the need for 100-year flood protection because of the additional capacity under Highway 101.

It has been estimated that new design and materials technology, coupled with a 4<sup>th</sup> barrel constructed underneath the new Highway 101 bridge and reduced water surface elevations resulting from downstream improvements, would likely provide for passage of the estimated 100-year flow under the new structure during a mean high tide event.

We anticipate that discussions with Caltrans will continue to progress rapidly over the next two months, which will allow for the JPA's Request for Proposals for environmental planning of a downstream project – anticipated to be announced after the July Board meeting – to include issues related to connecting the Highway 101 project to the Creek.

b) Presentation by Philip Williams & Associates: San Francisquito Creek Flood Reduction Alternatives Analysis

In early March, the JPA hired Philip Williams and Associates (PWA) to conduct technical analysis of options for implementation projects to increase the flow capacity of San Francisquito Creek between U.S. 101 and San Francisco Bay, and to identify options for upstream detention within the watershed. The selection of PWA was the result of a public Request For Proposals announced by the JPA, and a very competitive interview process that included members of the JPA's Project Management Team.

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The JPA asked PWA to test downstream conveyance and upstream detention alternatives for hydraulic performance, including the following tasks:

- 1) Incorporate information from recently completed hydrology and hydraulic models, and limited environmental considerations, in order to recommend preferred alternatives for downstream conveyance; and
- 2) Evaluate the topography and hydrology of the upper watershed to determine if – from an engineering standpoint – a workable option for upstream detention exists.

PWA's work on these tasks has led them to conclude that upstream sites could detain enough water during a severe storm to reduce downstream flooding, and that flow capacity downstream can be substantially increased to address flooding concerns and provide additional benefits. It is clear that the scale of a downstream project will depend on many factors, including the likelihood and size of upstream detention, the value placed on reducing threats to individuals and flood insurance costs to landowners, and other issues.

It is important to note that PWA's analysis and recommendations do **not** take into account other considerations – such as land uses, ecological and cultural assets, recreational opportunities, political boundaries, etc. – that will be important to include when deciding on a project to implement.

With the PWA presentation today, these other considerations now come to the fore, and thus begins a two month public dialogue on the relative costs and benefits of PWA's recommended alternatives, a process first discussed at the February JPA Board meeting and described in the next agenda item. The Board meeting today represents a starting point from an engineering standpoint for this community conversation, so that the JPA can move forward this summer with at least one project that achieves multiple benefits and has broad community support.

The group most appropriate to next look at PWA's recommendations and advance this dialogue beyond today's Board discussion is the JPA's Project Management Team. The members of this Team were not asked to comment on the PWA findings prior to today; the process of securing their input will begin next week and their expert advice will be solicited at several points throughout the process.

Christie Beeman and Jeff Haltiner of PWA will present their findings and recommendations to the Board as information and discussion only; no action is being sought from the Board at this time. Their final written report will be forthcoming to the JPA within the next two weeks.

- c) Getting to Design and Environmental Planning of an Upstream and/or Downstream Project: A Plan for Gathering Community Input and a Schedule for Board Decision Making

During this discussion item, we will lay out the two-month schedule of events and meetings designed to secure input from the governing bodies (see Agenda Item 6.a.) and residents within the watershed prior to the Board authorizing project RFPs at its July meeting. We will discuss the summer meeting schedule for the JPA Board to ensure that Board members can attend the next two meetings (scheduled for June 25 and July 23), where the direction of our initial capital project(s) will be discussed and decided, and whether our scheduled meeting on August 27 should be held.