

Executive Director's Report, July 25, 2023

This Executive Director's report provides a summary of the status of projects, and other SFCJPA activities, in lieu of a regular Board meeting Director's report for the month of July 2023.

Please contact me with any questions or for more information.

Admin and Operations

Introducing our Intern – We are delighted to welcome Antonia Minion as our all-around intern. Antonia is assisting us with an array of tasks for both projects and admin/operations. Antonia is a Senior at Gunn High School and comes to us after working in Senator Becker's office. Antonia is looking forward to a career in environment-related policy. We appreciate Antonia's support and look forward to highlighting her contributions going forward.

Members' Agreement – Four of five members have voted to approve the second amended and restated Members' Agreement. The fifth and final member agency has scheduled the item for a meeting in late August.

Bank Transition – We are part-way through transferring our banking relationship from First Republic Bank to U.S. Bank. We don't anticipate any difficulties and envision this will be complete in the next 2 – 4 months.

Form 700 – State law requires the SFCJPA Board and "required filers" on staff to file the Form 700 statement of economic interests with the Agency's clerk of the board. The deadline for submitting this required filing has passed. By state law, those who have not filed are liable for a late fine. Please submit your Form 700 as required by mailing to SFCJPA 750 Menlo Ave Suite 250, Menlo Park, CA 94025 attention Clerk of the Board. If you have any questions or need assistance, please refer to the FPPC website, <https://www.fppc.ca.gov/Form700.html>.

NetFile –

Anyone required to file form a Form 700 with the SFCJPA will be receiving a request for information from staff on behalf of the NetFile team. This includes all Board members, alternates, staff, and legal representation. We must have this information to build our NetFile profile to have the system ready for electronic filing for next year. Please be on the lookout for an email coming from mhparker@sfcjpa.org.

Project Updates

Reach 2 Pre-Winter Preparation

Considering last winter's impacts, the SFCJPA team and our member agency colleagues have been coordinating several activities to recover from and to better prepare for next winter's rainy season. These activities include -

Annual Creek Maintenance Walk – We are planning to conduct our multi-agency creek evaluation earlier in the year and are planning for significantly more in-channel debris management than in previous years in anticipation of a predicted El Niño weather pattern next year.

Invasive and hazardous tree removal plan– To help reduce in-channel interference, we are developing, in partnership with our member agencies, an additional and sustained program of removing in-channel growth of hazardous trees (dead/diseased) and invasive trees/plants. The initial plan will focus on the flood prone Urban Reach 2 area but will coordinate with other programs in process by Stanford University in the upper watershed. Based on consultation with arborists and local watershed stewards at Grassroots Ecology, we are initially targeting three invasive tree species: acacia, eucalyptus, and tree-of-heaven. These trees spread rapidly, out competing native species, and result in degraded riparian habitat and can adversely impact creek hydrology. The [2000 San Francisquito Creek Bank Stabilization Master Plan](#) noted from field surveys documenting the existing conditions present along San Francisquito Creek that approximately 65% of the riparian habitat within the San Francisquito Creek project area was highly threatened by invasive plant species.

Invasive management is also one of the key recommendations of the SFCJPA's [Comprehensive Plan](#). Approval and Implementation of the plan will require permits and CEQA evaluation and is therefore a multiyear program. In the meantime, we are working with our partner agencies Stream Maintenance Programs that include San Francisquito Creek to determine what work may proceed along a faster timeline.

Channel Survey – Utilizing Valley Water's in-house resources we will be conducting bank-top and in-channel surveys once the channel is dry enough to safely do this work. The information from the survey will inform the update of our hydraulic (HEC-RAS) model.

HEC-RAS Model 3rd party evaluation – We are framing the scope of work, seeking input on the scope from key project partners, and contacting prospective consultants who may be able to perform this objective evaluation.

It is our goal to complete these two critical activities – channel survey and HEC-RAS model 3rd party evaluation - by the end of October.

Flood Early Warning System – We are reviewing and assessing existing rain and stream flow gages and potentially adding redundant/additional gages in select locations.

We are contacting and coordinating with Stanford, USGS, and NOAA as part of this effort.

Multi-Agency Coordinating Committee (MAC) – We are coordinating with MAC leadership and members to schedule an early pre-season meeting and planning for a table-top exercise.

Member City Public Works Teams and Valley Water Coordination – We are convening regular calls among public works and appropriate Valley Water personnel to ensure there is clear common understanding regarding important functions such as: emergency action item jurisdiction (geographic scope/locations of responsibility), mutual aid coordination processes, inventorying emergency supplies, pre-ordering/procuring supplies, group procurement opportunities, staging of sand-bags or other flood response materials and equipment, coordinating communications and community outreach about flood preparedness and response. This information will flow directly into the pre-season MAC meeting for overall awareness and coordination.

Communications Coordination – We are convening a multi-agency Public Information Officer (PIO) team to address consistent messaging and coordinating community outreach before, during, and after any winter storms and any resulting impacts.

Reach 2 Project -

The SFCJPA is supporting the City of Palo Alto's Newell Bridge RWQCB permit application. The City of Palo Alto is also coordinating with PG&E and CalTrans. The City of Palo Alto plans to initiate the construction bid process in approximately two months, and the schedule for Newell Bridge construction is still expected to be in 2024.

Review and potential adjustment of Reach 2 project designs will follow the outcomes of the bank and channel survey, and the HEC-RAS model 3rd party objective review (which will be informed by the results of the survey). Additionally, the following activities are underway -

CAP205/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – We are in close communication with the USACE CAP205 team regarding the planned survey and the potential ramifications to the CAP205 project (the channel widening components) of the updated understanding of channel hydraulics. We, and our USACE partners, are committed to supporting each other's work and to pursuing the CAP205 process as long as it remains feasible to do so.

Top-of-Bank and Channel Widening Designs – Design work for these components of the project will pause as we consider the outcomes of the survey and HEC-RAS model update.

Top-of-Bank Supplemental EIR – The SEIR is on pause, until we can consider the outcomes of the survey and HEC-RAS model update.

Schedule for Survey and HEC-RAS model review – We anticipate being able to utilize Valley Water's in-house survey teams for the channel survey. Once in the field, this work will require 2 - 3 weeks to complete. Following that, and with the channel survey information in hand, the 3rd party review of the HEC-RAS model is expected to take about 3 – 4 weeks. It is my goal to have these important action items completed by the end of October.

Permissions to Enter and Real Estate Action Items – The SFCJPA is now implementing tasks associated with obtaining necessary Permissions to Enter (PTEs) and potential follow-on negotiations for easements. We are preparing final outreach to property owners from whom we have had no response. If there continues to be no response, our next action will involve a petition to the court to allow access to these properties for our necessary survey work. Associated action items are underway.

SAFER Bay Project -

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA) Tour – On October 6, 2023, the SFBRA and the SFCJPA will host a public tour of the SAFER Bay Project. Board members, member agency staff and members of the public are welcome and encouraged to join.

On June 19, President Biden and Governor Newsom were in the Baylands Nature Preserve in Palo Alto promoting the new climate resilience challenge and funding.

President Biden stated that he just toured the SAFER Bay Project and a reference to the project being a public-private partnership. He also mentioned the East Palo Alto and Belle Haven communities that will be protected by this project.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hhs_Rwmo3w

Local news coverages of this visit:

<https://paloaltoonline.com/news/2023/06/19/in-palo-alto-president-biden-announces-26-billion-for-climate-resilience-modernizing-electrical-grid>

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/biden-california-18159808.php>

Permitting/CEQA – The schedule for CEQA has been delayed by about 10 months, with the draft Environmental Impact Report now planned for February 2025. We continue coordination with the with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), with our next scheduled pre-application meeting on August 16, 2023. This meeting will focus on design concepts, including restoration and mitigation options.

Coordination and Communication – the SAFER Bay project is the focus of regular update and coordination calls between the SFCJPA our member agencies, CalTrans,

Southbay Saltponds Restoration Project, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, SFPUC, and other landowners and stakeholders.

As requested by the SFBRA, the SAFER Bay project will be one of the featured projects being highlighted in a break-out session on August 2nd at the upcoming [California Climate Adaptation Forum](#), coordinated by CivicWell and likely to draw over 1000 attendees. Participation in this conference is funded by our grant from SFBRA.