

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

APN: NA

Case No.: NA

Location: Sycamore Creek, Santa Barbara County

Project Title: Sycamore Creek Improvement Study Report

Project Description: Sycamore Creek has areas of extensive flooding within the City of Santa Barbara and improvements have long been considered within this corridor. In 2011, Caltrans replaced the Sycamore Creek Bridge over Hwy 101, improving the capacity of this lower reach of the creek and increasing interest in improving the remaining capacity of the creek. The creek channel is restricted by development and bridge capacities. To reduce flooding, a capacity improvement project will be developed to update and expand on a previous Flood Capacity Master Plan for Sycamore Creek. This updated report will examine capacity and potential drainage improvements from the Yanonali/Montecito St. Bridge at the 5-points intersection to the outlet of the creek at East Beach and will be used to determine alternatives to increase channel capacity to reduce reoccurring flooding to this area. The study will also integrate planned bridge replacements proposed by the City of Santa Barbara.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Exempt Status: (Check one)

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section: CEQA Article 18, Statutory Exemptions Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies and CEQA Article 19, Categorical Exemption, Section 15306 (Class 6) Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities.

Reasons to support exemption findings: The proposed Sycamore Creek Study is data and information gathering to identify possible future alternative for reducing flood

hazards. The Board has not approved, funded or adopted any future actions as this study is for planning and feasibility purposes only. The study does not result in a disturbance to any environmental resource. Therefore, the above listed exemptions apply to this action.

There is no substantial evidence that there are unusual circumstances (including future activities) resulting in (or which might reasonably result in) significant impacts which threaten the environment. The exceptions to the categorical exemptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines are:

- (a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located -- a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.**

The Sycamore Creek Improvement Study is a data and information gathering exercise and will not result in any physical disturbance to the environment. Therefore, the study is categorically exempt from CEQA requirements as defined by Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19, Section 15306 which addresses basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

- (b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.**

There are no significant incremental or measurable cumulative impacts for the proposed study. Therefore, this exception to the Categorical Exemption is not applicable to the proposed project.

- (c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.**

The Sycamore Creek Improvement Study is for informational purposes only and will have no significant effect on the environment. Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility that the study will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

- (d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited**

to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

The Sycamore Creek Improvement Study does not result in the installation of any facilities. Therefore, this exception to the Categorical Exemption is not applicable.

- (e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

The Sycamore Creek Improvement Study does not include any aspects of any hazardous waste site. Therefore, this exception to the Categorical Exemption is not applicable to the proposed project.

- (f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The Sycamore Creek Improvement Study will not directly result in any structural or physical changes that would impact any historical resources. Therefore, this exception to the exemption does not apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Jon Frye Phone #: 805 568-3440

Department/Division Representative: Maureen Spencer Date: September 19, 2016

NOTE: A copy of this document must be posted with the County's Planning & Development Department at least 6 days prior to consideration of the activity by the decision-makers to comply with County CEQA guidelines and a copy must be filed with the County Clerk of the Board after project approval to begin a 35 day statute of limitations on legal challenges.

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