



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Community Services
Department No.: 057
Agenda Date: September 23, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Jesús Armas, Director, Community Service Department
Contact Info: Joe Dzvonik, Assistant Director, Housing and Community Development
SUBJECT: Budget Revision to Support Santa Maria Park Ranger for Santa Maria Riverbed Patrol

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County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve budget revision 0010768 that establishes appropriation in the amount of \$42,864 to jointly fund a Santa Maria Park Ranger position to patrol the Santa Maria Riverbed to prevent the re-establishment of encampments in the Riverbed; and
- b) Determine that the above-recommended action is not a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), finding that the actions consist of administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve funding in the amount of \$42,864 to pay a portion one-half of the cost of a City of Santa Maria (City) Park Ranger position assigned to patrol specific parcels within the Santa Maria Riverbed (SMRB) that have been prone to the establishment of homeless encampments over the past several years.

Much effort and funding has been invested by the County to restore the SMRB recreational area to near pristine condition by resolving over 100 encampments in the past calendar year. In order to maintain this safe, clean and encampment-free environment, and prevent the re-establishment of encampments the County and the City propose to partner to jointly fund a dedicated City Park Ranger

to monitor activity along and in the riverbed, and take appropriate action to prevent reestablishment of homeless encampments directly adjacent to the City. The cost of the County's participation will be paid from a CSD special revenue and does not involve the use of General Fund dollars. Funding is recommended for this fiscal year only. Potential future funding is proposed to be determined in the context of the budget for next fiscal year.

Discussion:

Between October 2023 and October 2024, the County of Santa Barbara led a multi-jurisdictional effort to resolve over 100 encampments in the SMRB, with over 120 unhoused individuals. This operation included collaboration with the County of San Luis Obispo, the City of Santa Maria, law enforcement, service providers and various municipal departments.

Outcomes included:

- Over 100 individuals connected to case management and housing support.
- Removal of 150+ tons of debris and hazardous waste.
- Dozens of animals treated or rehomed by Care4Paws and the County of San Luis Obispo Animal Services.
- Restoration of the SMRB as a recreational area.

To sustain these results and prevent re-encampment, staff proposes co-funding a City Park Ranger position in partnership with the City.

Background:

In October 2023, the County received State funding to address homeless encampments in and around the SMRB. The funding supported person-centered efforts to transition individuals from encampments into interim or permanent housing, and to clean up debris and hazardous materials left behind. By November 2024, all encampments were cleared with the area restored to near-pristine condition. These efforts were led by CSD in partnership with the County of San Luis Obispo County and the City of Santa Maria.

Due to the unique, overlapping land ownership and use agreements in the SMRB—spanning the County of San Luis Obispo, the County of Santa Barbara County, the City of Santa Maria, CalTrans, and multiple private parties—ongoing collaboration is needed to prevent re-establishment of encampments.

This partnership establishes a shared funding framework among the County and the City to support a City Park Ranger position to prevent new encampments within the SMRB. It does not create an employer-employee relationship between the Rangers and the County. Instead, it facilitates cost-sharing for services that benefit both jurisdictions.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

If Recommended Action A of this board letter is approved, the County will be responsible for paying approximately \$42,864 to the City for the period of October 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 funds. Potential continued funding will be determined as part of the FY 2025-26 budget process. The County's participation will be paid from a CSD special revenue and does not involve the use of General Fund dollars.

