



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

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

Agenda Number:

Submitted on:  
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: PW/Flood Control  
Department No.: 054  
Agenda Date: April 7, 2026  
Placement: Administrative Agenda  
Estimated Time:  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from: N/A  
Vote Required: Majority

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**TO:** Board of Directors, Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
**FROM:** Department Director: Chris Sneddon, Public Works Director  
Contact: Matt Griffin, Engineering Manager – Flood Control  
**SUBJECT:** Montecito Flood Control Master Plan Phase 2, Lower San Ysidro Creek Improvements, First Supervisorial District

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** Risk Management

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Directors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor (Attachment A) with AtkinsRéalis USA Inc. to provide engineering planning services for the Montecito Flood Control Master Plan Phase 2, Lower San Ysidro Creek Improvements for the period of April 7, 2026 through June 30, 2027, in the amount of not to exceed \$799,063;
- b) Approve and authorize the Public Works Director, or designee, to make immaterial changes in accordance with the Agreement, to make amendments to the professional services agreement with AtkinsRéalis USA Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$79,906 and to extend the term of the Agreement by up to one-year to complete the work within the scope of the Agreement; and
- c) Find that the proposed Montecito Flood Control Master Plan, Phase 2 is exempt under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15262; Feasibility and Planning Studies and Section 15306 (Class 6) basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities, and direct the Clerk of the Board to file the attached Notice of Exemption (Attachment B).

**Summary Text:**

This item is on the agenda to approve an Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with AtkinsRéalis USA Inc. (Atkins) to proceed with Phase 2 of the Montecito Flood Control Master Plan (Attachment A). The agreement will provide preliminary engineering services to advance planning and design for improvements along Lower San Ysidro Creek from San Leandro Lane to the ocean in the Montecito area.

**Discussion:**

Montecito has had many floods and debris flows over its history. Heavy rain falls on steep hills, sending fast-moving water into creeks that do not have capacity to handle large flood events. These creeks are mostly natural, and during storms they can fill with rocks, mud, and fallen trees, which block the flow of water. Flooding becomes even worse after wildfire by increasing runoff rates and debris generation. Several major floods have caused serious damage, including events in 1964, 1969, 1995, 1998, 2023, and 2024, as well as the devastating January 9, 2018 debris flow that caused loss of life.

The Phase 1 Master Plan confirmed that San Ysidro Creek is a major contributor to flooding in the lower Montecito vicinity. During large storm events, the creek overtops its banks and inundates lower areas of Montecito where Romero, San Ysidro, and Oak Creeks merge into a single expanded floodplain. Based on these findings, the District has prioritized Lower San Ysidro Creek to be the focus of Phase 2 of the Montecito Flood Control Master Plan.

The intent of Phase 2 is to develop 30% complete preliminary plans for channel, bridge, and access improvements for the focus area, with the goal of creating project development documentation that can be used in future final design and construction grant applications. The scope of the Phase 2 work also includes additional data collection, topographic surveys, hydraulic analyzes, agency coordination, construction cost estimating, and Benefit Cost Ratio analyses.

**Background:**

A Montecito Flood Control Master Plan Phase 1 request for proposals was sent to 3 firms in fall of 2022 where Atkins was selected as the most qualified. On February 14, 2023, the Board approved the contract for Phase 1 with Atkins. On December 3, 2024, the Board received a report of the Montecito Flood Control Master Plan Phase 1 and directed the District to finalize the report, which was completed in early 2025. Phase 1 provides a roadmap for future projects and helps guide how improvements will be planned and built over time. Implementation of projects identified in Phase 1 cannot feasibly be funded with local Flood Control District funds alone and will require additional funding sources, including State and Federal grants.

The Phase 1 Master Plan focused on making creeks and bridges large enough to safely carry floodwaters during major storms, while protecting the natural look of the area and allowing State and Federally endangered fish to move through the creeks. The goal is to handle a “100-year” storm, which has a 1% chance of happening in any given year. Large debris flows were also considered but fully controlling them is not realistic due to their size and cost. Instead, the Phase 1 plan includes debris basins and other measures to capture debris and keep creeks and bridges working during floods.

Community input helped shape the plan through three public open houses held during the development of Phase 1, with residents asking for strong flood protection while limiting impacts to private property and keeping costs reasonable. Some projects will require wider creek channels, bridge replacements, and property easements. The plan will be built in phases over many years, as funding allows, and will require support from local, state, and federal sources. Overall, the Master Plan provides a clear path to improve flood safety and protect homes and lives in Montecito.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The total contract amount with Atkins is \$878,969, consisting of a base agreement amount of \$799,063 and a contingency of \$79,906, for preliminary engineering services through June 30, 2027.

Funding for this project is included in the FY 2025–26 Adopted Budget and the Proposed FY 2026–27 budget in the South Coast Flood Zone (FD-2610), program PG-0543005, spend category SC-7702, project PRJ-000444 (SC2301), cost center CC-54410.

No General Fund funding will be utilized for these actions.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

Funding Source	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	Total
South Coast FZ	192,500	686,469	878,969
Total	\$ 192,500	\$ 686,469	\$ 878,969

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to post the Notice of Exemption (Attachment B) and send copies of the stamped NOE, signature page, and minute order of these actions to Christina Lopez at [clopez@countyofsb.org](mailto:clopez@countyofsb.org).

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with AtkinsRéalis USA Inc.

Attachment B – Notice of Exemption

**Contact Information:**

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Civil Engineering Specialist  
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