



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

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA LETTER**

**Department Name:**  
Public Works/Flood Control  
**Department Number:**  
054  
**Agenda Date:**  
July 7, 2026  
**Placement:**  
Administrative Agenda

**Estimated Time:**  
N/A  
**Continued Item:**  
No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
  
**Vote Required:**  
Majority

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**TO:** Board of Directors, Flood Control and Water Conservation District<sup>DS</sup>  
**FROM:** Department Director: Chris Sneddon, Public Works Director<sup>DS</sup> *CS*  
**CONTACT:** Matt Griffin, Deputy Director-Flood Control District *MG*

**SUBJECT: Annual Routine Maintenance Plan, Fiscal Year 2026-27 – All Supervisorial Districts**

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**Concurrences:**

**County Counsel Concurrence:**  
As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence:**  
As to form: N/A

**Other Concurrence:**  
As to form: N/A

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**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Directors:

- a) Approve the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan, including individual maintenance projects described in the Plan; and
- b) For the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act:

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- i) Find that the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan is within the scope of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Updated Routine Maintenance Program [01-EIR-01; State Clearinghouse No. 2001031043] and subsequent annual addenda which adequately describe this activity for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act;
- ii) Find that pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Sections 15168(c)(2) and 15162(a), after considering the Program Environmental Impact Report certified by the Board of Directors in November 2001, and subsequent annual addenda, that no subsequent Environmental Impact Report or Negative Declaration is required because: i) no substantial changes are proposed which require major revisions of the Program Environmental Impact Report; ii) no substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which require major revisions of the Program Environmental Impact Report; and iii) no new information of substantial importance concerning the project's significant effects or mitigation measures, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time that the Program Environmental Impact Report was certified, has been received;
- iii) Find that the proposed actions described in the Exempt Facilities Section of the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan are for the operation and maintenance of existing public structures, facilities or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that which presently exists and that the proposed actions are therefore exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15301, and direct the Clerk of the Board to file the California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption for each exempt facility project described in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan;
- iv) Determine that the addenda to the previously certified PEIR (01-EIR-01) contained within the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan have been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and adopt the mitigation measures included for each project as the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15168 (c)(3); and
- v) Approve and adopt the California Environmental Quality Act Findings included in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan.

### **Summary Text:**

This item is on the agenda to approve the Annual Routine Maintenance Plan for FY 2026-27 (Annual Plan – Attachment A) which consists of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exempt projects and projects defined within the scope of impacts identified by the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR – Attachment B) requiring addenda for FY 2026-27.

The CEQA-exempt activities are based on CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities. Projects that are exempt fall into one of the following five categories:

- Maintenance activities in existing non-perennial, fully concrete-lined stream channels,

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- Removal of obstructive material,
- Clearing, repair, and replacement of flood control devices such as check structures, culvert openings, drainage structures, levees, sediment basins, weirs, or stream flow measuring stations,
- Maintenance activities on accessways outside of estuaries and riparian corridors, and
- Maintenance activities on earthen channels, which have been developed to convey urban storm water, agriculture storm water, or agriculture tail water and have little or no vegetation in them.

The CEQA exempt activities are in areas where there are no impacts to any significant resource at the site, downstream, or adjacent to the site. The described FY 2026-27 exempt projects have been exempted in prior years with the Planning and Development Department's concurrence.

Activities within the scope of the PEIR are described in individual addenda to the PEIR specific to the named drainages where they will occur within the Annual Plan. The maintenance activities are presented as an Addendum to the PEIR utilizing appropriate maintenance practices described and analyzed in the PEIR. The mitigation measures incorporated in these projects become the mitigation and monitoring program to ensure that impacts are mitigated to the fullest extent feasible.

Once the Board has approved projects described in the Annual Plan, applications can be made to the appropriate regulatory agencies for notices to proceed on the approved projects.

The Flood Control District (District) has current long-term permits with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

### **Discussion:**

The District Annual Routine Maintenance Program was developed after many years of environmental study and coordination with the public, environmental groups, and permitting agencies. In 1987, the Board directed District staff to prepare a Program EIR on routine maintenance activities to: *"... provide a systematic approach to reviewing future flood control activities...offer feasible mitigation and/or alternative maintenance techniques which provide adequate protection against flood damage in the least environmentally damaging way."* In May 1990, a draft Program EIR was issued for public review. A final Program EIR was issued in March 1991 which identified an Environmentally Superior Alternative. The PEIR included numerous mitigation measures (called Standard Maintenance Practices) to avoid or reduce specific impacts to botanical resources, wildlife, water quality, stream geomorphology, cultural resources, and aesthetics.

In June 1991, the Board convened an Interagency and Public Advisory Committee (IPAC) to work with the District to develop a revised Maintenance Program, based on the EIR's Environmentally Superior Alternative. The IPAC met on seven occasions and developed, through a consensus process, a revised list of Standard Maintenance Practices (SMPs) and an annual planning and project approval process. Together, these products represented the revised Environmentally Superior Alternative that was recommended to the Board. The project was ultimately approved in March 1992 when an Addendum to the 1991 Program EIR was completed.

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In 2001, after successfully implementing the Maintenance Program for nine years, the District determined that the Program needed revision for the reasons described below.

- Include new information about threatened and endangered species.
- Address water quality impacts in a more sophisticated manner.
- Consider new analytic tools for assessing channel capacity and geomorphology.
- Include the Lower Santa Ynez River maintenance into the annual program.
- Replace the Standard Maintenance Practices with newly written mitigation measures that directly correlate to identify impacts.
- Improve the format and organization of the Program EIR.
- Include a variety of bank and grade stabilization measures in the program.
- Update the Habitat Restoration Plan
- Assess the Impacts of the Los Carneros Mitigation Bank.

Following public review and comment in 2001 a Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Updated Routine Maintenance Program was approved by the Board of Directors on December 11, 2001.

The 2026/27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan marks the 35th Annual Plan that has been implemented since the Program's inception.

The objectives of the routine maintenance program are to maintain the capacity of key watercourses in the County, to preserve existing conveyance capacity and prevent the accumulation of obstructing vegetation and sediments that could increase existing flood hazards that could then result in damage to life, and public property and infrastructure. The extent and frequency of maintenance are dependent upon many factors including the availability of funds from individual flood zones, the degree of flood hazard, and the environmental impacts of the maintenance actions. The planning process undertaken to formulate the annual maintenance plan and the maintenance practices that are used by the District first avoids and then minimizes environmental impacts to natural habitats, water quality, sensitive species, and natural fluvial processes.

It is extremely important to understand that the implementation of the District's maintenance program, with its approach to avoidance and minimization, avoids the severe environmental impacts of increased flooding, bank erosion, habitat loss, and the associated impacts to water quality that would occur if the District did not provide routine maintenance within key watercourses throughout the county.

### **Background:**

In December 2001, the Board of Directors adopted a revised Annual Routine Creek Maintenance Program which included: a) Maintenance Practices and Mitigation Measures; b) Associated Flood Control Policy Statements; and c) An annual planning and project approval process.

Development of the Annual Plan provides multiple benefits. The plan serves as a basis for demonstrating needs, analyzing alternatives, proposing mitigation, and selecting the most effective

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and least environmentally damaging District maintenance practices. The plan also allows the District to prioritize maintenance efforts and expenditures which also helps in the management of individual projects.

The annual planning process, as adopted by the Board, requires that the District conduct a public workshop to hear the public and other agencies' input and concerns about the proposed Annual Plan.

An email announcing the workshops and the availability of the summary was sent on May 5, 2026 to individuals and organizations who have previously expressed an interest in this maintenance program. A summary of the proposed Annual Plan was available in our office and was posted on the District's website on May 11, 2026.

The public workshop was held virtually via the Teams app on May 19, 2026. Two members of the public requested access and one participated in the meeting. District staff remained available for public comment and questions through June 1, 2026.

The proposed Final Annual Plan has been posted on the District's website here: <https://www.countyofsb.org/2384/Environmental-Group>.

Mandates have been discussed in previous Board letters regarding the Revised Creek Maintenance Program. The District's authority under state law allows the District to undertake these projects for the public's benefit. Several projects constructed in cooperation with the federal government have mandated levels of maintenance associated with them. The District's projects are subject to compliance with environmental laws and regulations.

### **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The costs associated with the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan are included in the adopted FY 2026-27 Flood Control District budget within the Public Works Department. The total estimated cost is \$4,736,000, funded by the Flood Control District funds across all flood control flood zones in the Services and Supplies object level and spend categories SC-7701 - Channel & Drain Maintenance, SC-7703 - Debris Basin Maintenance, and SC-7706 - Environmental Compliance.

As in prior years, the scope and prioritization of maintenance projects are determined based on available funding and current facility conditions. Each year's Annual Plan includes the drainages most in need of maintenance. While much of the facility maintenance is not mandated, ongoing maintenance is required for certain engineered or improved facilities, including many federally funded projects now owned and maintained by the District.

Preparing a comprehensive Annual Plan allows the District to reduce costs by combining environmental review into a single document, rather than preparing separate environmental documentation for each project. More importantly, the Annual Plan streamlines the state and federal permitting process, which allows the district to complete maintenance work before the next storm season.

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**Fiscal Analysis:**

Funding Source	FY 2026-27	Total
All Flood Zones	\$4,736,000	\$4,736,000
<b>Total</b>	\$4,736,000	\$4,736,000

The costs for the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Annual Routine Maintenance Plan are included in the Flood Control District’s Adopted Budget under the Public Works Department. This work is budgeted in the various Flood Zones every fiscal year as part of the annual budget process.

No General Fund money will be used for this work.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to post the attached CEQA NOE (Attachment C) and to email a copy of the minute order of these actions along with a copy of the stamped NOE to the Flood Control District, Attn: Christina Lopez at [clopez@countyofsb.org](mailto:clopez@countyofsb.org).

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A** – Annual Routine Maintenance Plan FY 2026-27
- Attachment B** – 2001 Program EIR
- Attachment C** – CEQA NOE AP FY2026-27

**Contact Information:**

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Environmental Compliance Manager  
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