



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 15, 2022

TO: David Leamon, Director of Public Works

FROM: Frederic Clark, Deputy Director of Public Works – Development/Traffic

SUBJECT: **Phase II - Evaluation of Stormwater Management and Groundwater Recharge in the Dry Creek Watershed of Stanislaus County**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the final report of this study be presented to the Board of Supervisors as a 'Receive and File' item to establish finality to this step in the process.
2. It is recommended a study along the lines of a Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report look at the non-engineering factors, i.e., environmental, economic, social, and cultural factors, to help establish the viability of sites.
3. It is recommended that the County coordinates and collaborates with other stakeholders to further explore all potential solutions to flood mitigation along the Tuolumne River.

DISCUSSION

Flooding along the Tuolumne River is a continuing problem and is the driving force behind this study. Dry Creek is an unregulated watershed which contributes to the flooding along the Tuolumne River. This study is being made approximately 25 years after the flooding event which was the basis for recommendations from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Modesto, and Stanislaus County to study



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Dry Creek for flood mitigation. The ultimate goal is to mitigate flooding to enhance community safety and quality of life.

Though the grant from the Department of Water Resources, which is the funding source for this study, does not require any form of local legislative action, this study is a preliminary step in analysis of a regional problem. Public input questioned the validity of siting of any flood hold on the lower reaches of Dry Creek based on non-engineering concerns.

This study is an engineering study of potential flood holds. It does not involve more than an acknowledgement that environmental, economic, social, and cultural factors are present and will need to be studied more in depth if specific sites are to be advanced for further consideration. Whether or not any flood control project ever advances on Dry Creek is not the concern of this study. This study merely answers the question as to where the best possible flood holds with groundwater-recharge benefits may exist. The public outreach process yielded community concerns for the environmental, economic, social, and cultural factors, which the project team agrees further study would need to be done by qualified personnel. That said, it is recommended a study along the lines of a Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report look at these non-engineering factors to help establish the viability of sites. There appears to be a marked difference in landscape, flora and potentially fauna, level of development and investment, and settlement, essentially the environmental, economic, social, and cultural factors starting at about the Tim Bell Road crossing of Dry Creek and proceeding downstream. Though some sites downstream of the Tim Bell Road crossing of Dry Creek have more desirable engineering factors of increased volume and percolation to groundwater potential, the non-engineering factors cannot be ignored and potentially will outweigh the engineering factors.

Additionally, since this study and the public outreach were completed, more options have surfaced regarding other means of mitigating flooding along the Tuolumne River. This includes clearing the floodway of obstructions and development which are negatively impacted by flooding; and reducing pre-flood and flood flows on the Tuolumne River. Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District have filed for new water rights to divert "flood" water out of the Tuolumne River for irrigation. These alternative solutions would help mitigate flooding along the Tuolumne River. This project team recommends continued coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders to further explore all potential solutions to flood mitigation along the Tuolumne River.