



**CITY OF LARKSPUR
Staff Report**

September 5, 2018 Council Meeting

DATE: August 27, 2018
TO: Honorable Mayor Hillmer and the Larkspur City Council
FROM: Dan Schwarz, City Manager
Shannon O'Hare, Assistant to the City Manager
SUBJECT: FLOOD ZONE NO. 9 (ROSS VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATERSHED)
UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF LETTER TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize Mayor Hillmer to send the attached letter to the Board of Supervisors.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

On September 18, the Board of Supervisors, in its capacity as the board of the Marin County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (District), will conduct a public hearing on the San Anselmo Flood Risk Reduction (SAFRR) Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The project description and EIR are available online – links are provided at the end of this report. Staff submitted the attached comment letter on the EIR.

The SAFRR falls within the area of Flood Zone No. 9 (FZ9), one of the many zones of the District. The Board of Supervisors governs FZ9 with advice from an advisory board comprised of city officials and public representatives. Mayor Hillmer is Larkspur's representative to this advisory board. Mayor Hillmer is seeking direction from the City Council about the SAFRR specifically and FZ9 generally in advance of upcoming meetings about flood control projects.

ANALYSIS

A few years ago, the Town of San Anselmo was awarded a Department of Water Resources (DWR) grant for a flood prevention/mitigation project. The Town initially intended to use the grant to redevelop one of its parks as a detention basin, but public input resulted in that proposal being set aside. The SAFRR qualifies for the DWR grant, which would pay for half of the project's estimated \$17.4 million cost. The other half of the cost would be covered by the Ross Valley stormwater fee assessed on properties from Fairfax to Larkspur. The project is projected to have a significant impact on 10-year flood levels in San Anselmo, with limited impact to 25- and 100-year flood events.

AGENDA ITEM 8.1

The \$8.7 million committed by FZ9 to the project makes the SAFRR one of the most significant projects in FZ9 on a fiscal basis. Not only is the FZ9 contribution substantial, it represents a much higher percentage of the project budget than other projects have received.

The DWR grant is a fixed amount. If bids for the SAFRR are higher than \$17.4 million, it is unclear how the project will be funded. One option is to reduce the scope of work covered by the project. Other options include a contribution from the Town of San Anselmo or an increase in funding from FZ9.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the City Council authorize Mayor Hillmer to send the attached letter.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Schwarz, City Manager

Online Information

Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program

<http://marinwatersheds.org/creeks-watersheds/ross-valley-flood-protection-watershed-program>

San Anselmo Flood Risk Reduction (SAFRR) Project

<http://marinwatersheds.org/resources/projects/san-anselmo-flood-risk-reduction-safrr-project>

Attachments

1. Larkspur's comment letter on EIR
2. Draft letter



City of Larkspur

400 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, California 94939
Telephone: (415) 927-5110 Fax: (415) 927-5022
Website: www.cityoflarkspur.org

Ms. Rachel Reid, Environmental Planning Manager
Marin County Community Development Agency
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 308
San Rafael, CA 94903

Via email: envplanning@marincounty.org

July 2, 2018

RE: SAN ANSELMO FLOOD RISK REDUCTION PROJECT - EIR

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the above referenced project. The City of Larkspur is a participant in and supporter of the Ross Valley Watershed Flood Risk Reduction Program.

The City supports the development of projects that will reduce flood risks in the watershed, while not creating any additional flood risks in Larkspur. The City looks forward to the District finalizing the detail design and modeling of the proposed improvements such that the EIR's conclusion that the proposed project would not increase flood risk in areas downstream can be fully vetted and confirmed.

Pg. 2-28 Hydrology and Water Quality – Impact 4.9-3:

In reference to the Nursery Basin, Mitigation Measure 4.9-3a states

'... the Flood Control District shall prioritize sediment removal at this site over other sites covered by the SMP and shall remove all deposited sediment up to the maximum volume allowed under the existing permit (2,100 cubic yards.)'

There is no discussion of impacts of this proposed change in sediment removal operations within the watershed.

Mitigation Measure 4.9-3b states

'measures to counter scour and sedimentation issues must be based on more advanced project design.'

The remainder of the section discusses only scour analysis and protection measures. It is understood that sedimentation issues will be studied and accounted for in addition to the scour analysis.

Rachel Reid
July 2, 2018
Page 2 of 2

Pg. 3-12 3.3.1 Project Objectives

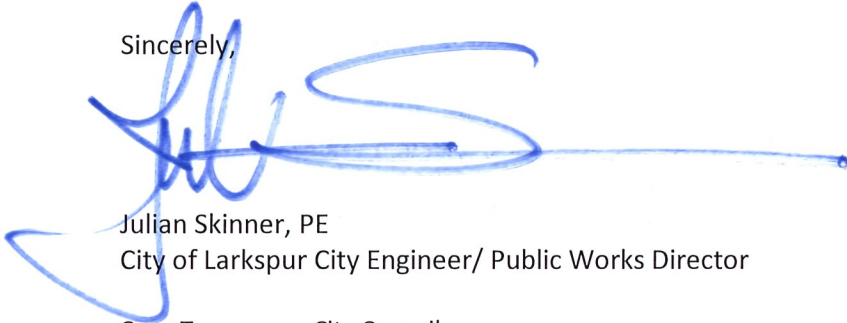
The City of Larkspur would like the 'not increase flood risk in areas downstream' explicitly listed in the project objectives.

General

Throughout sections 4 and 5, the EIR discusses increased downstream flows both from this project and with the cumulative analysis of the other program projects including bridge improvements and the Corps project. The discussion of downstream impacts appears limited to general watershed and areas in the vicinity of the Winship and Sir Francis Drake bridges. It is understood that detail project design and modeling will include analysis of the additional flows and their impacts downstream, including specifically in Larkspur.

We look forward to working with the District in the delivery of this and other projects to reduce flood risks in the watershed.

Sincerely,



Julian Skinner, PE
City of Larkspur City Engineer/ Public Works Director

Copy To: City Council
 Dan Schwarz, City Manager
 Neal Toft, Planning and Building Manager



City of Larkspur

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Damon Connolly, President
Board of Supervisors
County of Marin
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903

September 5, 2018

Dear President Connolly and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

At your September 18, 2018 meeting, you will consider adopting the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the San Anselmo Flood Risk Reduction (SAFRR) Project. The Larkspur City Council is aware that the comment period for the EIR closed. We recognize that the Board and the San Anselmo Town Council have identified this project as one of value to the San Anselmo community. It is not our purpose in writing to the Board to comment on the EIR. Rather, our purpose is to ask the Board to use this meeting as an opportunity to discuss the state of the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program (RVPWP)

In the short term, the SAFRR and the other projects already approved and in process under the RVPWP represent progress after many frustrating years of study without action. Individually, all of these projects have merit. However, it is increasingly unclear to our Council whether the collective impact of these projects is being given sufficient weight. We fear the desire to “get something – anything – done” means that the evaluation of a project’s benefit relative to its cost (particularly its opportunity cost) is being sacrificed.

In the early phases of the Program, there was a list of projects that were given priority due, in part, to their perceived benefit relative to cost. Some of these projects were rejected by the public or reevaluated and redefined by staff. The list looks very different today than it did when the collective impact of the Program was discussed. We suggest that it is time to revisit that discussion and recommend that the funding prioritization of the entire RVPWP be referred to the Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board for evaluation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Dan Hillmer

cc: City Council
City Manager