



Notice of Preparation and Notice of Public Scoping Period

Santa Clara River Levee Improvements Upstream of Highway 101 (SCR-1) Project

Date: June 28, 2021
To: Residents, Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties
Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the
Santa Clara River Levee Improvements Upstream of Highway 101 Project

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify agencies, organizations, and interested parties that the Ventura County Public Works Agency - Watershed Protection (Watershed Protection or VCPWA - WP), as the Lead Agency, is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Santa Clara River Levee Improvements Upstream of Highway 101 (SCR-1) Project (SCR-1 Project or proposed Project).

Watershed Protection is soliciting input from reviewing agencies and the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR. In accordance with CEQA, Watershed Protection requests that agencies review the Project Description provided in this NOP and provide comments on environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of the agency. The EIR will be used by Watershed Protection when considering approval of the proposed Project and by other Responsible and Trustee Agencies to support their discretionary actions related to the proposed Project. Watershed Protection is also seeking the views of residents, property owners, and the public regarding issues that should be addressed in the EIR.

The process of determining the focus and content of the EIR is referred to as “scoping” under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15083. Scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth, and eliminates from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on a proposed project. Scoping is also an effective way to bring together and address the concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties. Crucial issues may be identified through public and agency comments.

The purpose of scoping is to help ensure that a comprehensive and focused EIR will be prepared that provides a firm basis for the decision-making process. Scoping is not conducted to resolve differences concerning the merits of a project or to anticipate the ultimate decision on the proposal. Members of the public; affected federal, State, and local agencies; interest groups; stakeholders; and other interested parties may participate in the scoping process for the proposed Project by providing written comments or recommendations concerning the issues to be analyzed in the EIR.

Submitting Comments: Comments may be sent anytime during the 30-day NOP comment period. The NOP review and comment period begins **June 28, 2021** and ends **July 27, 2021**. All comments must be received during the comment period. Please include the name of a contact person for your agency, if applicable. All comments should be directed to:

Ventura County Public Works Agency - Watershed Protection
Attn: Angela Bonfiglio Allen
800 S. Victoria Ave., #1600
Ventura, CA 93009

If you do not have internet access or have general questions, please contact Angela Bonfiglio Allen at (805) 477-7175.

Scoping Period: To avoid physical gatherings in compliance with restrictions caused by COVID-19, Watershed Protection will conduct an online virtual public scoping comment period instead of holding a traditional Scoping Meeting. Scoping materials are provided on the SCR-1 Project website (<https://www.vcpublicworks.org/wp/santa-clara-river/santaclarariverlevee/>) to provide an overview of the proposed Project and an opportunity for the public to ask questions and submit comments.

Comments and questions may also be emailed to scr1info@ventura.org. Substantive scoping comments will be addressed in the EIR.

Project Overview and Location

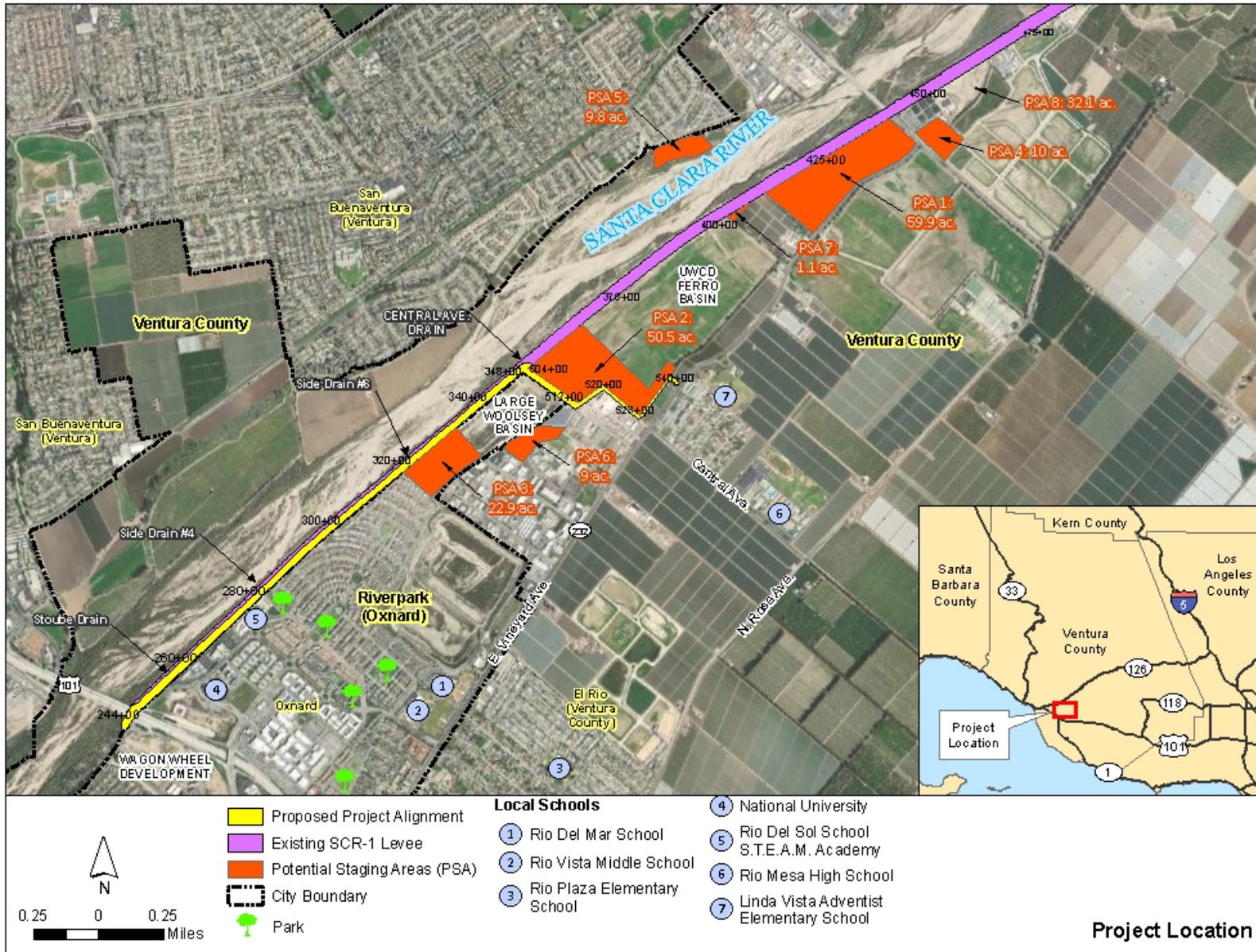
Overview

The proposed Project would involve structural improvements to the existing SCR-1 levee to achieve compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) levee certification requirements, address structural deficiencies, design flood protection structures that can accommodate a future bikeway, and incorporate public education features. In 2009, FEMA determined that the SCR-1 levee did not fully comply with all the federal levee certification regulatory requirements. These deficiencies put the levee at risk of failing from a one percent annual chance (also known as the 100-year) flood event, which would put areas on its landward side within a Special Flood Hazard Area when FEMA revises the corresponding Flood Insurance Rate Map. The proposed Project would improve flood protection to residents and businesses in the City of Oxnard located within the inundation area on the land side of SCR-1 by achieving a one percent annual chance flood capacity.

Location

The proposed Project is in unincorporated Ventura County generally along the southern bank of the Santa Clara River, as shown in Figure 1. The proposed levee improvements would extend from Highway 101 along the existing SCR-1 levee system, which is owned and operated by Watershed Protection, and continue northeast past the RiverPark community. The SCR-1 levee improvements would continue past the northern terminus of RiverPark (Xanadu Way) and then northeast parallel to East Vineyard Avenue, passing the Riverpark B, LLC North Detention Basin and the City of Oxnard Large Woolsey Basin (both are former gravel pits). At the Central Avenue Drain, the proposed alignment would deviate from the existing SCR-1 levee alignment and proceed southeast between the Central Avenue Drain on the south and United Water Conservation District's (UWCD) Spreading Grounds (Ferro Basin) on the north. Upon passing the Ferro Basin, the alignment would turn northeast along the eastern edge of Ferro Basin and enter the existing Harry's Berries agricultural fields before reaching high ground just short of East Vineyard Avenue.

Figure 1. Project Location



Project Objectives

The objectives of the Project are to:

- Construct new, upgrade existing, and maintain the SCR-1 structures to provide continuous flood protection to properties in the City of Oxnard that would otherwise require flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program, and do so in a cost-effective manner prior to FEMA revision of adjacent Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), as funding permits.
- Achieve compliance with FEMA levee certification requirements as identified in 44 CFR §65.10 through the implementation of structural improvements to the SCR-1 levee system.
- Design flood protection structures that accommodate a future bikeway in support of the City of Oxnard Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan.
- Incorporate watershed health public education features, in coordination with the Rio School District and other interested parties, to the extent feasible.

Project Description

The proposed Project consists of improvements to the existing SCR-1 levee to meet the FEMA levee certification criteria to provide adequate flood protection to structures and roadways in the northern portion of the City of Oxnard from a Design Flow (100-year) flood event with a peak flow of 226,000 cubic feet per second. The proposed activities would generally be conducted on or in proximity to the existing SCR-1 levee primarily between Highway 101 and Central Avenue, generally following the southern bank of the Santa Clara River near the City of Oxnard, California. The proposed improvements would occur along an approximately 2.8-mile stretch of existing and proposed new SCR-1 levee system from Highway 101 to the Central Avenue Drain, and approximately 0.8 mile of improvements would occur along a new levee segment, which would extend southeast along the Central Avenue Drain and north along the eastern edge of UWCD's Ferro Basin.

Project Components

UngROUTED Rock Riprap. UngROUTED rock riprap at a 2H:1V slope would be placed along the Central Avenue Drain segment from where the open channel transitions to a reinforced concrete pipe to the tie-in point/terminus (approximately 3,900 feet).

Concreted Rock. The existing deteriorated ungrouted rock revetment levee face would be replaced with concreted rock on the existing river side slope underneath the Highway 101 Bridge (approximately 425 feet). Existing grouted rock riprap along the river side slope would be replaced with new concreted rock at a 2H:1V slope, and at a 1H.5:1V slope at the toedown depth (below grade). Proposed toedown depths along the levee range from approximately 30 to 35 feet below the apparent riverside levee toe (the point at which the levee intersects with the ground). The toedown depth along the levee after the open channel portion of Central Avenue Drain would be approximately 5 feet.

Floodwall. A floodwall (concrete retaining wall) would be constructed under Highway 101 on top of the existing levee for approximately 255 feet to allow the SCR-1 levee to meet the top of levee elevation requirements under the bridge soffit (ceiling under the bridge). The floodwall would be approximately 3 feet above the earthen embankment (the top of the floodwall would end approximately 6 inches below the Highway 101 soffit) and 12-inches thick, constructed of steel-reinforced concrete.

Soil Cement Revetment and Toedown. North of Highway 101, approximately 2.3 miles of existing ungrouted rock riprap revetment would be removed and replaced with soil cement. The replacement soil cement would be sloped at 1.5H:1V along the river side from north of Highway 101 to Central Avenue Drain. The land side would be sloped at 2H:1V with compacted soil. Along the north Central Avenue Drain maintenance access road, where the Central Avenue Drain is currently an open channel, soil cement would be sloped at 1.5H:1V facing UWCD's Ferro Basin (approximately 1,150 feet). The soil cement toedown would protect against scour during flood events. Storm runoff flowing from the top of the levee and down the soil cement levee face would be directed to a trench comprising of a sand filter and crushed rock for storage and infiltration. This trench would run along the full length of the levee. An adjacent 15-foot-wide area in the river terrace along the length of the levee would remain clear of vegetation and function as a maintenance road for periodic inspections of the levee toe and provide access to the Stroube and Central Avenue Drain outlets to the Santa Clara River. Runoff from this road would also be directed to the adjacent trench along the levee toe.

Educational Betterments. Educational features, subject to available stakeholder funding and regulatory approvals, are intended to be constructed behind the new Rio Del Sol School S.T.E.A.M. Academy and west of Windrow Park to provide local outdoor learning opportunities. These educational betterments include an outdoor amphitheater, interpretive stations with education signage, bird blinds (bird viewing structures), connection or crossing between the school and the levee, native landscaping in concrete planter boxes compatible with levee features and may include a 3H:1V soil overlay planted with native grasses adjacent to the amphitheater (approximately 800 feet) or along the entire school property.

Access Ramps and Levee Road. Eight new access ramps would be constructed on the river side of the levee near existing ramps. Additionally, a new land side access ramp would be constructed near the Highway 101 Bridge, allowing for the levee to connect with the City of Oxnard's future bicycle path consistent with the *Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan*. All access to the levee and maintenance road would remain restricted to the public and would be secured by a new chain link fence and swing gates. Public access may be permitted after the City of Oxnard completes its Santa Clara River Trail (a schedule for the City's trail development is currently undetermined).

Central Avenue Drain. The existing Central Avenue Drain and its associated structures (inlet, outlet, flap gates, and double reinforced concrete pipes) would be removed and replaced to accommodate construction of the new levee segment.

Interior Drainage System. Improvements to the interior drainage system would be required for the levee to meet Federally mandated certification regulations. All openings along the levee (e.g., storm drain outlets) would be provided with closure devices such as automatic flap gates, duckbill gates, or slide-type gates to prevent water from flowing back to the land side of the levee during a high flow event.

Vegetation Removal. All vegetation within the temporary excavation area (necessary to construct the buried portion of the levee) would be removed prior to construction. Clearing and grubbing would be performed on a combination of vegetated areas and non-vegetated areas with interfering materials (e.g., concrete debris, abandoned pipes, or trash).

Operations and Maintenance. Although O&M of the facilities that comprise the levee system may be considered Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15301, it is prudent to evaluate the potential impacts of these activities during the EIR process to address potential exceptions to the exemptions listed in Section 15300.2. Therefore, O&M activities planned for the SCR-1 levee system will be evaluated in the EIR. Existing O&M will be considered the baseline condition for the proposed Project.

Proposed Scope of the EIR

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15081, Watershed Protection has determined that an EIR is required for the proposed Project. Watershed Protection has not prepared an Initial Study and will instead begin work directly on the EIR, as allowed under State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(d) and 15063(a). The EIR will focus on the potentially significant effects of the proposed Project and will document the reasons for concluding that other effects would be less than significant.

Areas of Potential Impact

The issue areas listed below are anticipated to be analyzed in detail in the EIR. Certain criteria within these issue areas were determined not to be significant and no further analysis is warranted, as detailed in the next section. Issue numbering corresponds to the *County of Ventura Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* (2011), as modified to reflect current State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G.

Air Quality (Issue 1). Construction and O&M of the proposed Project would generate pollutant emissions and fugitive dust which may have the potential to violate regional air quality standards or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation. Additionally, there may be a risk of contracting Valley Fever, a respiratory illness caused by inhalation of disturbed soil containing a species of fungus that is suspected to occur in Ventura County.

Biological Resources (Issue 4). The proposed Project would include construction and operation activities adjacent to the Santa Clara River, which could result in significant impacts to common wildlife, nesting birds, special-status or rare wildlife species, and special-status plant species. Additionally, construction and O&M could directly or indirectly impact jurisdictional waters, wetlands, Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas, Critical Habitat, and wildlife movement.

Noise/Vibration (Issue 21). Noise caused by construction equipment could potentially exceed ambient noise levels at sensitive receptors such as residential areas and schools. O&M may also involve similar activities and equipment as construction; therefore, O&M activities may potentially exceed noise thresholds.

Transportation/Circulation (Issue 27 A.1 and H). The proposed Project may have significant impacts to level of service and vehicle miles traveled due to the extent of heavy equipment and vehicles required to transport materials primarily during construction.

Effects Found Not to be Significant

Based on the site or project characteristics, it is anticipated that impacts would not occur or would be minimized through design features and environmental commitments within the following environmental issue areas and therefore, these specific environmental impact criteria from the *County of Ventura Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* (2011), as modified to reflect current State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, will be included in the Effects Found Not to be Significant section of the EIR per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15128. A brief description of why each issue area or criteria has been found not to be significant, and therefore is expected not to be analyzed in detail in the EIR, is provided below.

Water Resources (Issue 2)

- **2A Groundwater Quantity.** The proposed Project would use water from the City of Oxnard, which is sourced from imported surface water from the Calleguas Municipal Water District, imported groundwater from UWCD, and local groundwater pumped from City wells. Although the groundwater in the Project area is overdrafted, the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency would manage

water use associated during the Project's temporary construction period and ensure that overdraft and other adverse conditions are avoided or reduced. Groundwater encountered during dewatering may be used for dust suppression but is not expected to substantially reduce the overall groundwater quantity in the Oxnard Subbasin. Furthermore, the levee segment along the Ferro Basin, which is expected to be utilized to infiltrate groundwater in the future, has been designed to be compatible with groundwater recharge activities. No water would be required during O&M.

- **2B Groundwater Quality.** The proposed Project would include digging, trenching, and/or excavation during construction. Groundwater is approximately 10 feet deep from riverside grade near Highway 101 and continues to increase in depth as the levee proceeds upstream. No groundwater was found near Central Avenue Drain at depths up to 50 feet. Dewatering would be required to extend the levee toedown during excavation near Highway 101, Stroube Drain, Side Drain No. 4, and Side Drain No. 6. Standard construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) for dewatering would be implemented to ensure that groundwater quality degradation associated with direct contamination would not occur. The Project would comply with Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) General Waste Discharge Requirements for Specified Discharges to Groundwater in the Santa Clara River Basin (Order No. 93-010). Watershed Protection would also comply with RWQCB Order No. R4-2018-0125 for discharges of groundwater from construction and Project dewatering to surface waters in coastal watersheds in Ventura County. Additionally, the Project would comply with existing standards and regulations for the handling of hazardous and potentially hazardous materials to minimize the potential for an accidental spill or leak to prevent groundwater contamination. The proposed Project would also comply with the State Water Resources Control Board National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Construction Permit for stormwater discharge and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- **2C Surface Water Quantity.** The proposed Project would use water from a blend of surface water and groundwater for soil compaction and dust suppression during construction. Additionally, groundwater encountered during dewatering may be used for dust suppression as well, which would slightly reduce the use of surface water. The use of groundwater would comply with either RWQCB Order No. R4-2018-0125, which may also allow use of groundwater for dust control, or General Waste Discharge Requirements for Specified Discharges to Groundwater in the Santa Clara River Basin (RWQCB Order No. 93-010) and water quality standards defined therein. The Project's use of surface water would be temporary during construction and is not anticipated to result in adverse effects to surface water quantity, as it would not divert or dewater the Santa Clara River or other water bodies.
- **2D Surface Water Quality.** Construction activities could occur during the rainy season, during which sediment transport may occur and affect the Santa Clara River. However, the proposed Project would comply with all applicable requirements, including the California Waterboards Basin Plan for the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, Clean Water Act Section 401, and the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, including BMPs to minimize or avoid water quality impacts. Environmental Commitments would be implemented to further reduce contamination of stormwater or flood flows and to comply with the MS4 Permit and the Construction General Permit.

Mineral Resources (Issue 3)

- **3A Aggregate.** The proposed Project would be located on or immediately adjacent to land within Sector B of the Ventura County Mineral Resource Protection overlay zone. However, the proposed Project would cover roughly one percent of Sector B. Furthermore, the proposed Project would not traverse land under an active mining conditional use permit (CUP). Future mineral extraction within Ferro Basin would only be possible in the area between the bottom elevation of the basin

(approximately 85 feet) and the seasonal groundwater elevation (approximately 80 feet) underlying the area. The proposed Project would extend the levee toedown to a depth much shallower than these depths (elevation of approximately 65 feet along Central Avenue Drain at Ferro Basin). The proposed Project would not reach depths that could encounter mineral deposits, and no significant mineral deposits could be present within the Ferro Basin due to the shallow groundwater underlying the area (approximately 5 feet deep). Construction and O&M of the proposed Project would not hamper or preclude extraction of aggregate resources.

- **3B Petroleum.** The proposed Project would traverse several inactive petroleum CUPs. Approximately 0.45 mile of the southern end of the proposed Project would traverse the El Rio Oil Field, but the oil field would continue to be accessible from North Ventura Road. Proposed improvements to the levee would not change access to any oil CUPs or oil fields.

Agricultural Resources (Issue 5)

- **5A Soils.** The proposed Project would traverse agricultural lands at the northern terminus of the alignment. As such, approximately 0.55 acre of Prime Farmland would be permanently impacted, which is less than the County's significance threshold for Prime/Statewide agricultural lands of 5 acres. The proposed Project would also permanently convert up to 3.91 acres of Farmland of Local Importance in an area zoned Agricultural Exclusive, which is less than the County's significance thresholds of 15 acres for Farmland of Local Importance.
- **5B Land Use Incompatibility.** Although the proposed Project and staging areas would extend across Prime Farmland and Farmland of Local Importance, the County's public works projects are an allowable use in the AE zone (Section 8105-4 of the Ventura County Code of Ordinances). The proposed Project is consistent with the existing zoning. Furthermore, Watershed Protection would implement environmental commitments to minimize the potential for fugitive dust emissions to adversely affect adjacent active agricultural land. No conflicts with existing agricultural land uses would occur.

Scenic Resources (Issue 6)

Visual impacts caused by construction would be short-term and temporary as the Project primarily involves modifications to an existing levee facility. The presence of construction equipment and materials would not substantially alter the scenic value of the Eligible State Scenic Highway (Highway 101) near the project site. UngROUTED rock riprap, grouted rock riprap, and soil cement would be of natural colors that would not substantially contrast with the visual characteristics of the surrounding Project area. The floodwalls may be susceptible to graffiti; however, Watershed Protection's existing O&M procedures include the prompt removal of graffiti on floodwalls and implements a Graffiti Abatement Program that works with non-profit organizations and neighbors to form neighborhood graffiti patrols to assist with graffiti reporting and removal. Additionally, the floodwalls exposed to public view could incorporate textured patterns, a mural, or artistic motif to deter graffiti.

Paleontological Resources (Issue 7)

Ground-disturbing activities associated with the proposed Project would occur in artificial fill and in river wash, stream terrace, and alluvial deposits with no to low paleontological sensitivity.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (Issue 8)

- **8A Archaeological.** No previously recorded eligible archaeological resources exist within the Project's area of potential effects (APE). However, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to cause adverse impacts to as-of-yet unidentified buried archaeological resources. Standard environmental

commitments would be implemented including cultural resources monitoring per the SCR-1 Project's Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan (developed as part of the 408 permit for geotechnical testing) and procedures for inadvertent discovery of human remains.

- **8B Tribal Cultural Resources.** Pursuant to legal requirements, Watershed Protection has consulted with all relevant tribes. An individual from the Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians identified a prehistoric burial site within 0.5 mile of the proposed Project alignment, which indicated that the project area may have high sensitivity for containing buried tribal cultural resources. Standard environmental commitments would be implemented including tribal cultural monitoring and procedures for inadvertent discovery of human remains.
- **8C Historic.** No previously recorded eligible archaeological resources exist within the Project's APE. However, ground-disturbing activities may adversely impact as-of-yet unidentified buried archaeological and historical resources. Therefore, standard environmental commitments would be implemented including cultural resources monitoring per the SCR-1 Project's Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan and procedures for inadvertent discovery of human remains.

Coastal Beaches and Sand Dunes (Issue 9)

The proposed Project is approximately 4.5 miles east of the nearest coastline and is outside the Coastal Zone of the County's Local Coastal Program. The proposed Project would not create barriers to sediment transport within the Santa Clara River or to coastal beaches and would not disturb sand dune replenishment or vegetation.

Fault Rupture (Issue 10)

The Project alignment does not cross any known faults, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones, or County-designated Fault Hazard Areas. The proposed Project would comply with Watershed Protection's Design Manual and geotechnical recommendations. Furthermore, Watershed Protection would commit to repair post-seismic event damage to reduce adverse effects due to fault rupture (the levee would be repaired following earthquake damage).

Ground Shaking (Issue 11)

Compliance with Watershed Protection's Design Manual and geotechnical recommendations would reduce the Project's potential for damage associated with seismically induced ground shaking. O&M activities would include visual inspections immediately after an earthquake, and corrective measures would be implemented to repair the levee to its designed status.

Liquefaction (Issue 12)

Although the likelihood for liquefaction to occur in the project area is low, the floodwall beneath Highway 101 and replacement of the Central Avenue Drain outlet and the two 72-inch diameter drain pipes may be susceptible to damage from liquefaction. However, the nearby geotechnical study conducted for the SCR-3 Project by Fugro Consultants, Inc. concluded that liquefaction hazards are likely minimal. Additionally, Watershed Protection has committed to conducting visual inspections of the levee immediately after local disasters to implement corrective measures to return the levee to its designed status as part of O&M.

Seiche & Tsunami Hazards (Issue 13)

No large, enclosed bodies of water exist in the project area, so no impacts would occur regarding seiches. The proposed Project would not exacerbate tsunami hazards in this area.

Landslide/Mudflow (Issue 14)

The project area is relatively flat and not located within a California Geological Survey-designated earthquake-induced landslide area.

Expansive Soils (Issue 15)

The levee and adjacent soils where proposed Project improvements would occur have low to no shrink-swell potential.

Subsidence (Issue 16)

Watershed Protection would conduct periodic settlement surveys along SCR-1 to ensure the levee continues to function as designed. Although groundwater dewatering would be required during construction, its duration would be limited and not extensive enough to result in subsidence.

Hydraulic Hazards (Issue 17)

- **17A Non-FEMA.** The proposed Project may cause site-specific erosion during construction; however, compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and environmental commitments, such as BMPs in the Ventura Countywide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System or NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit and the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, would reduce potential non-FEMA hydraulic hazards.
- **17B FEMA.** The proposed Project is designed to provide flood hazard protection in accordance with federal, state, and local standards. It is also required for the FEMA Letter of Map Revision and FEMA certification, which is anticipated to occur after Project construction is complete (likely in 10 to 15 years after project approval in 2024, or sometime between 2034 and 2039).

Fire Hazards (Issue 18)

Although the proposed Project would not be located within a designated High Fire Hazard Area/Fire Hazard Severity Zone or Hazardous Fire Area, most construction activities would occur adjacent to the Santa Clara River channel, which experiences seasonal dry periods making it susceptible to fires. Standard environmental commitments would be implemented as part of the proposed Project, which would include compliance with applicable sections of the California Uniform Fire Code and the Ventura County Fire Protection ordinances, standards, and regulations.

Aviation Hazards (Issue 19)

The proposed Project is located within the Oxnard Airport sphere of influence but is not located within the airport land use plan boundary or within the designated flight path of the airport facility. It would also not involve any above-ground equipment or structures that could obstruct or interfere with aviation activities or navigable airspace.

Hazardous Materials/Waste (Issue 20)

- **20A Hazardous Materials.** The proposed Project would include the use of potentially hazardous materials for construction equipment and vehicles. Compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and environmental commitments for testing, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials would reduce potential impacts from hazardous materials.
- **20B Hazardous Waste.** The proposed Project would generate hazardous waste during construction. The proposed Project would comply with State regulations, including those defined by the Department of Toxic Substances Control to safely dispose of all hazardous waste. Watershed

Protection would also consult with the Environmental Health Division to ensure that the proposed Project would prevent contamination from improper storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous wastes. Excavation and construction dewatering could have a potential for unknown soil or groundwater contamination. Because of the Project's proximity to agricultural areas, soil may be contaminated by pesticides. Contaminated soil spoils associated with the proposed Project would be properly identified, managed, and disposed of in compliance with standard environmental commitments for work in agricultural areas.

Daytime Glare (Issue 22)

No major sources of daytime glare would occur during construction or operation of the proposed Project.

Public Health (Issue 23)

The proposed Project would benefit public health by reducing flood hazards in areas located within the inundation area on the land side of SCR-1. Soil contamination from construction would be avoided by incorporating environmental commitments. Potentially significant impacts regarding Valley Fever will be evaluated in the EIR (see Air Quality, above). No other public health impacts are anticipated from the proposed Project.

Greenhouse Gases (Issue 24)

The proposed Project is not expected to generate greenhouse gas emissions exceeding significance criteria or generate any new net operational greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the Project.

Community Character (Issue 25)

The proposed Project would provide flood control protection that would preserve and protect the surrounding community. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with the existing community character.

Housing (Issue 26)

The proposed Project would neither remove existing housing nor prevent the future construction of homes in the project area. No increase to existing full-time employment is expected.

Transportation (Issue 27, A.2 through 4; B through G)

- **27A(2) Safety/Design of Public Roads.** Watershed Protection would coordinate with the City of Oxnard Public Works Department, the City of Ventura Public Works Department, and the Ventura County Public Works Agency Transportation Department regarding the use of access driveways as well as all potential haul routes, access points, Project-related parking, and bicycle and pedestrian access and restrictions to ensure compliance with safety standards. The proposed Project would not require access encroachments or roadway improvements.
- **27A(3) Safety/Design of Private Access Roads.** The proposed Project would not require the construction of, or modification to, any private roads.
- **27A(4) Tactical Access.** Access roads to the proposed Project are gated and not accessible to the general public. Tactical access conforms with guidelines, as access is provided from both ends of the project area.
- **27B Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities.** The proposed Project would be compatible with the City of Oxnard's Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan, which indicates a multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path is proposed along the SCR-1 alignment. The proposed Project would incorporate a new

maintenance ramp near the Highway 101 Bridge, which would allow for compatibility with the future bike path. The proposed Project would not increase bicycle or pedestrian volumes, and therefore would not result in a traffic-related safety issue or increase the demand for a protected highway crossing.

- **27C Bus Transit.** The proposed Project would not interfere with any public bus routes or bus transit facilities and would not create a substantial demand for bus transit facilities or services.
- **27D Railroads.** The Union Pacific Transportation Company railroad tracks are located near the south end of the project site, but do not cross the project alignment. Construction and operation of the proposed Project would not directly affect the operation of the rail line or any rail crossings.
- **27E Airports.** The proposed Project would not interfere with airport operation and does not have any incompatible features or structures that would interfere with aviation activities or navigable airspace.
- **27F Harbors.** The proposed Project is not located near any harbors; therefore, it would not affect the demand for boat traffic or facilities.
- **27G Pipelines.** The proposed Project would temporarily or permanently relocate portions of a 6-inch crude oil pipeline near the new Central Avenue Drain outlet structure. Watershed Protection would coordinate with the utility provider to ensure that Project activities avoid disruptions to operations and integrity of the pipeline.

Water Supply (Issue 28)

- **28A Quality.** The proposed Project would not require a permanent source of domestic water supply. Wastewater from portable toilets used during construction would be managed by an approved liquid waste hauler.
- **28B Quantity.** The proposed Project would not introduce a permanent water supply requirement and would not require a source of domestic water supply.
- **28C Fire Flow.** The proposed Project's water requirements would be temporary and minimal, limited to periodic dust abatement during construction. Additionally, no private water sources would be used.

Waste Treatment/Disposal (Issue 29)

- **29A Individual Sewage Disposal Systems.** No permanent sewage facilities would be constructed or modified.
- **29B Sewage Collection/Treatment Facilities.** The proposed Project would not affect sewage treatment facility capacity during construction and does not include any on-site sewage disposal facilities for operation.
- **29C Solid Waste Management.** Most or all excavated materials would be reused on site as levee fill. The proposed Project would generate minimal solid waste and would not substantially affect existing landfill capacities.
- **29D Solid Waste Facilities.** The proposed Project would generate a minimal amount of non-recyclable solid waste and is not anticipated to impact the capacity of waste disposal facilities.

Utilities (Issue 30)

A minimal amount of electricity for minor construction work would be required and would not substantially increase demand on a utility facility. An existing 6-inch crude oil pipeline located within the

construction limits for the new Central Avenue Drain outlet structure would be temporarily relocated. The pipeline would be reconnected after completion of construction. An existing power line along the south side of Central Avenue could also be temporarily or permanently relocated during construction depending on if it would interfere with levee maintenance. Watershed Protection would coordinate with utility service providers to avoid disruptions to existing utility operations.

Flood Control/Drainage (Issue 31)

- **31A Watershed Protection Facilities/Watercourses.** The proposed Project would not result in the obstruction, impairment, impediment, or alteration of flow of water which could result in increased risk of flood hazards. The levee height would be raised primarily at Highway 101 utilizing a floodwall. The remainder of levee improvements would involve replacing existing deteriorated ungrouted rock riprap with soil cement and ungrouted rock riprap and replacing/extending the toedown. As such, the improvements would not affect water surface elevations in the river. The proposed amphitheater and adjacent soil overlay would result in an approximately 0.04- foot change in water surface elevation and would therefore have negligible effects. Additionally, the amphitheater would be constructed with natural materials (e.g., stacked stone and decomposed granite; no rebar or concrete would be used) designed to break away in small pieces during a large storm event, further reducing effects on water surface elevation. This material would represent a minor contribution to the debris already carried by the river during a storm event that is large enough to wash away the amphitheater components. Overall, the proposed Project would reduce the existing risk of flood hazards.
- **31B Other Facilities/Watercourses.** The proposed improvements to SCR-1 would maintain low flows into the Santa Clara River and would not increase runoff within non-Watershed Protection facilities.

Law Enforcement/Emergency Services (Issue 32)

The proposed Project would not increase the population of the project area and would not develop habitable structures that could impact law enforcement or emergency services.

Fire Protection (Issue 33)

- **33A Distance/Response Time.** The SCR-1 alignment is located within one mile of the nearest fire station (a shared facility between Ventura County Fire Station 51 and City of Oxnard Fire Station 7) such that impacts regarding the distance and response time of fire protection services would not be substantial.
- **33B Personnel/Equipment/Facilities.** The proposed Project would not increase the population of the project area and would not increase the demand for fire protection service personnel, equipment, or facilities.

Education (Issue 34)

- **34A Schools.** The Rio Del Sol School S.T.E.A.M. Academy is adjacent to the levee between Side Drain #4 and Stroube Drain. The proposed Project would not involve the construction, removal, or displacement of any residences; consequently, it would not affect the demand for schools within Ventura County or Ventura.
- **34B Libraries.** The proposed Project would not involve the in-migration or departure of any residents. The nearest public library, Albert H. Soliz Library, is approximately 5,200 feet east-southeast of the project site. The proposed Project would not interfere with library operations or limit public access.

Recreation (Issue 35)

- **35A Local Parks/Facilities.** The proposed Project would not induce growth that would increase the demand for local recreational facilities. The proposed Project would be adjacent to Windrow Park. Construction would create short-term nuisance effects at this park; however, it would not interfere with recreation activities at this park or any other nearby parks.
- **35B Regional Parks/Facilities.** The proposed Project would not induce growth that would increase the demand for regional recreational facilities. The nearest regional facilities include a model airplane runway operated by the Camarillo Flying Circus, as well as the Buenaventura Golf Course and the River Ridge Golf Club. The proposed Project would not interfere with operations at either golf course but may temporarily limit access to the model airplane runway. Standard notification to the Camarillo Flying Circus would occur to coordinate timing and duration of access restrictions.
- **35C Regional Trails/Corridors.** Construction of the proposed Project would be consistent with the City of Oxnard's *Santa Clara River Trail Master Plan* as it has been designed to accommodate a future bikeway. Access to the levee after construction may be permitted after the City completes its Santa Clara River Trail. O&M activities would not substantially disrupt future trail users. The proposed Project would also not induce growth in the project area and would not increase the long-term demand for recreational facilities, including trails and corridors.

Energy

SCR-1 levee improvements would reduce future flood-related damage and reconstruction needs, thereby reducing future energy consumption that may be required without the Project. Energy use during construction and O&M would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary. The proposed Project does not include renewable energy, restrict renewable energy projects, or restrict the use of renewable energy.

Possible Alternatives

Following are a series of potential alternatives to be considered for the SCR-1 Project.

No Project Alternative. This alternative proposes no improvements to the entire levee system. The levee and its surroundings would remain the same as current conditions and would remain uncertified by FEMA due to deficiencies. Structures within the one percent annual chance flood hazard area would remain unprotected, and property owners with federally backed mortgages within this area would be required to purchase flood insurance after FEMA issues a revised FIRM.

Alignment Alternatives. Various alignment alternatives were developed in the *Alignment Comparison Memorandum* (2020) prepared by Tetra Tech for Watershed Protection. These alignments involve slight alterations to the existing SCR-1 alignment and use of soil cement (same as the proposed Project).

Material Alternatives. These alternatives were developed in the *Proposed Alternatives Comparison (Revised) Memorandum* (2019) prepared by Tetra Tech for Watershed Protection. Different types of levee slope material, including rock riprap, soil cement, sheet pile, and grouted stone at varying slopes will be considered.

Various alternatives or “betterments” were suggested during early outreach in October 2017. Watershed Protection reached out to responsible and trustee agencies and organizations to further explore these potential alternatives with the Project design team. These alternatives will be addressed in the EIR.

- **Soil Overlay.** Place a soil overlay on top of the river side soil cement slope and plant with native vegetation to prevent graffiti.

- **Nature Trail.** A nature trail to provide pedestrian access to the river.
- **Groundwater Recharge and Enhancement.** Divert stormwater from Central Avenue Drain into a groundwater recharge basin within a portion of Ferro Basin to promote groundwater recharge.
- **Bicycle Access on the Levee.** Place a bicycle trail on top of the levee with access points near the RiverPark community, and amenities such as benches and boxed trees along the trail.
- **Levee Extension Upstream of Ferro Basin.** Extend levee improvements approximately 5,361 feet to the upstream boundary of Ferro Basin to protect UWCD's infrastructure in this area.
- **Levee Improvements to South Mountain.** Construct the levee improvements along the entire length of SCR-1 until it terminates at South Mountain.

Project Scoping Process and Scoping Period

All interested parties are invited to submit comments on the scope and content of the EIR. Responsible and Trustee Agencies may need to use the EIR when considering permits or other discretionary approvals your agency may issue for the SCR-1 Project. Written comments can be submitted as described under "Submitting Comments" on page 1 of this document.