DATE: April 22, 2022

TO: Interested Persons

FROM: Chris Elias, Executive Director

RE: **NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND SCOPING MEETING FOR THE MOSSDALE TRACT AREA URBAN FLOOD RISK REDUCTION PROJECT**

COMMENT PERIOD

April 22, 2022 – May 23, 2022

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Website: www.sjafca.org/projects/mossdale-tract

SCOPING MEETINGS

In-Person Meeting, May 9, 2022; 6:30 p.m.: Manteca Transit Center, 220 Moffat Blvd. Manteca, CA 95336

Virtual Meeting, May 12, 2022; 11:30 a.m.

To join the virtual meeting, please use the following Zoom meeting link details:

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2484657696
By Phone: 1-669-900-6833
Meeting ID: 248 465 7696

Trustee and responsible agencies and members of the public are invited to attend and provide input on the scope of the EIR. Written comments regarding relevant issues may be submitted during the meetings.

INTRODUCTION

The San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCA) is the Lead Agency for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Mossdale Tract Area Urban Flood Risk Reduction (UFRR) Project (proposed project). The EIR to be prepared by SJAFCA will evaluate potential significant environmental effects of the proposed project and other actions associated with construction and operation and maintenance of the proposed project. Written comments regarding the issues that should be covered in the EIR, including potential alternatives to the proposed project and the scope of the analysis, are invited.

The EIR for the proposed project is being prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Consistent with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines section 15082, SJAFCA as lead agency has issued this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform responsible

agencies, the public, and trustee agencies of that decision. The purpose of the NOP is to provide information describing the proposed project and its potential environmental effects to those who may wish to comment regarding the scope and content of the information to be included in the EIR. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the project.

The EIR will provide an evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with development of the proposed project. The proposed project location, description, and environmental issue areas that may be affected by development of the proposed project are described below. The EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, on a direct, indirect, and cumulative basis; identify mitigation measures that may be feasible to lessen or avoid such impacts; and identify alternatives that may lessen one or more potentially significant impact to the proposed project.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

On March 9, 2015, the City of Lathrop authored a Concept Proposal for a State Urban Flood Risk Reduction (UFRR) grant to design fix-in-place improvements to the Reclamation District 17 (RD 17) levees to achieve an Urban Level of Protection (ULOP) equivalent to a 200-year level of protection. On May 15, 2015, the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) responded with a grant to prepare an UFRR study of alternatives and preliminary design of the preferred flood risk reduction project alternative from that study for the 22,400-acre Mossdale Tract area which was identified as being at risk of flooding from a 200-year flood event, with this risk being significantly increased under future climate conditions. The Mossdale Tract area includes RD 17 (16,110 acres), portions the Cities of Stockton, Lathrop, Manteca, and unincorporated San Joaquin County (see **Figure 1**). In November 2017, SJAFCA, consisting of the City of Stockton, San Joaquin County, and the San Joaquin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, modified its joint powers authority (JPA) structure to add the Cities of Lathrop and Manteca. The UFRR grant agreement and lead agency status were then transferred to SJAFCA in March 2020.

The primary flood risk in the Mossdale Tract area is from geotechnical failure of the existing levees. Levee overtopping or flanking is also a risk in the larger floods, especially in the future with climate change scenario. Geotechnical failures caused by through-levee seepage or under-seepage are typically sudden and unpredictable, and can produce large volume, high velocity flood flows. These failures come with little warning, with minimal time for evacuation and emergency actions. Overtopping and flanking floods are much more predictable, so evacuation is more effective for these failure mechanisms.

The Mossdale Tract area flood events generally occur during the winter months when colder air and water temperatures significantly increase the risk of death by exposure. The risk probability of unexpected levee failure (coupled with the consequence of basin-wide flooding) presents a continued threat to public safety, property, and critical infrastructure in the Mossdale Tract area. The UFRR study included technical evaluations of hydraulics, geotechnical conditions, cost estimates of potential alternatives, levee performance, multi-benefit features, and others. The UFRR study selected features of three initial alternatives to develop a hybrid alternative that could be evaluated and compared with the initial three alternatives. DWR and local stakeholders each provided input for “Alternative 4”. The differences were minor, but important, so Alternative 4 was presented with four minor permutations, represented as Alternatives 4a through 4d. The final selected alternative in the UFRR study (Alternative 4a) is the proposed project summarized below to be analyzed in the EIR.

PROJECT LOCATION/SETTING

The Mossdale Tract area (proposed project area) covers 22,400 acres and includes RD 17 (16,110 acres), portions the Cities of Stockton, Lathrop, Manteca, and unincorporated San Joaquin County (see Figure 1). The RD 17 levee system is comprised of State-Federal Project levees (also referred to as State Plan of Flood Control [SPFC]) along the San Joaquin River and French Camp Slough, which form the west and north borders of RD 17, and a non-Project dryland levee to the south. The land generally slopes east to west, and there is no levee along the east side of the RD 17 jurisdiction, so the interior drainage watershed extends to the east of RD 17. The proposed project area includes the SPFC levees, RD 17's non-Project dryland levee, the Mossdale Tract area, and areas to the west along the San Joaquin River identified for the potential development of ecosystem restoration features.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the proposed project is to provide increased public safety benefits by rehabilitating and improving flood risk reduction infrastructure to achieve a 200-year ULOP for the Mossdale Tract area. Objectives include:

1. Improve long-term operations, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement (OMRR&R) over time.
2. Modernize the flood risk reduction infrastructure to accommodate future performance and climate change resiliency goals identified in the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and in SJAFCA's Climate Change Adaptation Policy.
1. Implement a multi-benefit flood risk reduction project that: (1) improves ecological function and habitat in the flood-system, and (2) contributes additional societal benefits such as recreation where feasible.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

The proposed project would include the construction and operation of flood risk reduction and multi-benefit components in and adjacent to the Mossdale Tract area which are summarized below. Specifically, the following are the primary elements of the proposed project:

1. Fix in place and potential levee setback improvements with habitat enhancement and revegetation
2. Dryland levee extension
3. Ecosystem restoration at multiple sites
4. Recreational features along the levee system

The overall schedule to complete construction of the proposed project is anticipated to begin in 2025 and proceed over three years to completion in 2028. The proposed project elements are described below and are identified on **Figure 2**.

Flood Risk Reduction Components

Fix in Place and Potential Setback Levee Improvements - The following describes the various levee improvements that would be constructed and operated within the levee rights-of-way and easements under the proposed project.

1. Existing Dryland Levee Reconstruction and Seepage Berm. These improvements would consist of raising and widening the levee and constructing a drained seepage berm. They also include reconstructing pipe penetrations that cross the levee.
2. Cutoff Walls. The improvements would consist of constructing a fix-in-place traditional cement/bentonite slurry cutoff wall of varying depth along portions of the existing levee alignment.
3. Seepage Berm. The improvements would consist of constructing a drained seepage berm of varying width along portions of the existing levee alignment.
4. Erosion Repairs. The improvements would consist of supplementing riprap rock slope protections on the waterside of the levee along portions of the existing levee alignment.
5. Encroachment Remediation. The improvements would consist of removing high hazard encroachments.
6. Pipe Penetrations Rehabilitation. The improvements would consist of reconstructing pipe penetrations that cross the levee.
7. Levee Raise. The improvements would consist of raising the height of levee along portions of the existing levee alignment and extending the landside toe to meet levee slope design standards.
8. Potential Setback Levee. The improvements would consist of constructing a setback levee to meet the ULOP standards at a designated sharp bend in the San Joaquin River and connecting to existing levee segments.

Dryland Levee Extension – This improvement would extend the existing dryland levee by approximately one to two miles to the east as needed to prevent flanking during flood events.

Multi-Benefit Components

Ecosystem Restoration – The proposed project would locate undeveloped land on the water side of the levee system to create ecosystem restoration sites. Parcels of land are currently under investigation for meeting restoration criteria based on existing land habitats, elevations, and other opportunities for gaining natural ecosystem functions appropriate for the lower San Joaquin River. Because the locations and designs of these restoration sites are still under development, analysis of these project components will be done at a programmatic level in the EIR.

Recreational Features Along the Levee System – This component would develop recreational features, including recreational paths, along the top of levee and landside toe. Because the locations and design of this component are still under development, analysis of these project components will be done at a programmatic level in the EIR.

In addition to the proposed project, the EIR will evaluate up to two variants to the proposed project that will include the same general types of flood risk reduction and multi-benefit components as those proposed under the proposed project.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SCOPE OF THE EIR

The EIR will analyze potentially significant impacts that result from construction and operation of the proposed project. Pursuant to section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study has not been prepared for the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated for consideration under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, as well as non-environmental issues including:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils and Paleontology
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Services
- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Growth Inducement
- Cumulative Impacts

Environmental issues not contemplated for consideration due to the determination that there will be no impact include:

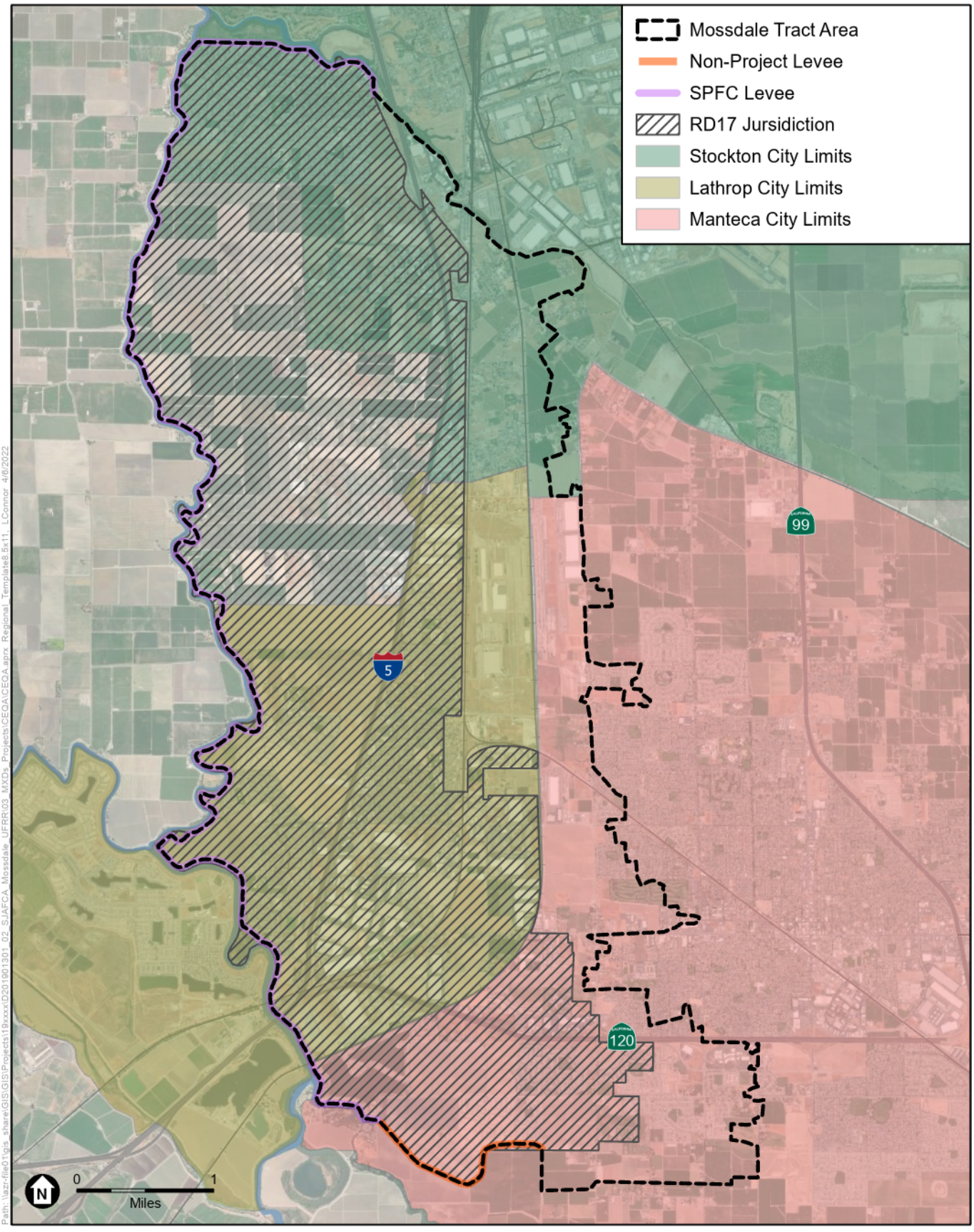
- Forestry Resources

The EIR will identify and evaluate alternatives to the proposed project.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS

Comments and suggestions as to the appropriate scope of analysis in the EIR are invited from all interested parties. Written comments or questions concerning the EIR for the proposed project should be directed to SJAFCA at the following address by 5:00 p.m. on May 23, 2022. Please include the commenter's full name and address.

Chris Elias, Executive Director
SJAFCA,
22 East Weber Avenue, Suite 301
Stockton, CA 95202 Phone (209) 937-7900
Email: Chris.Elias@stocktonca.gov

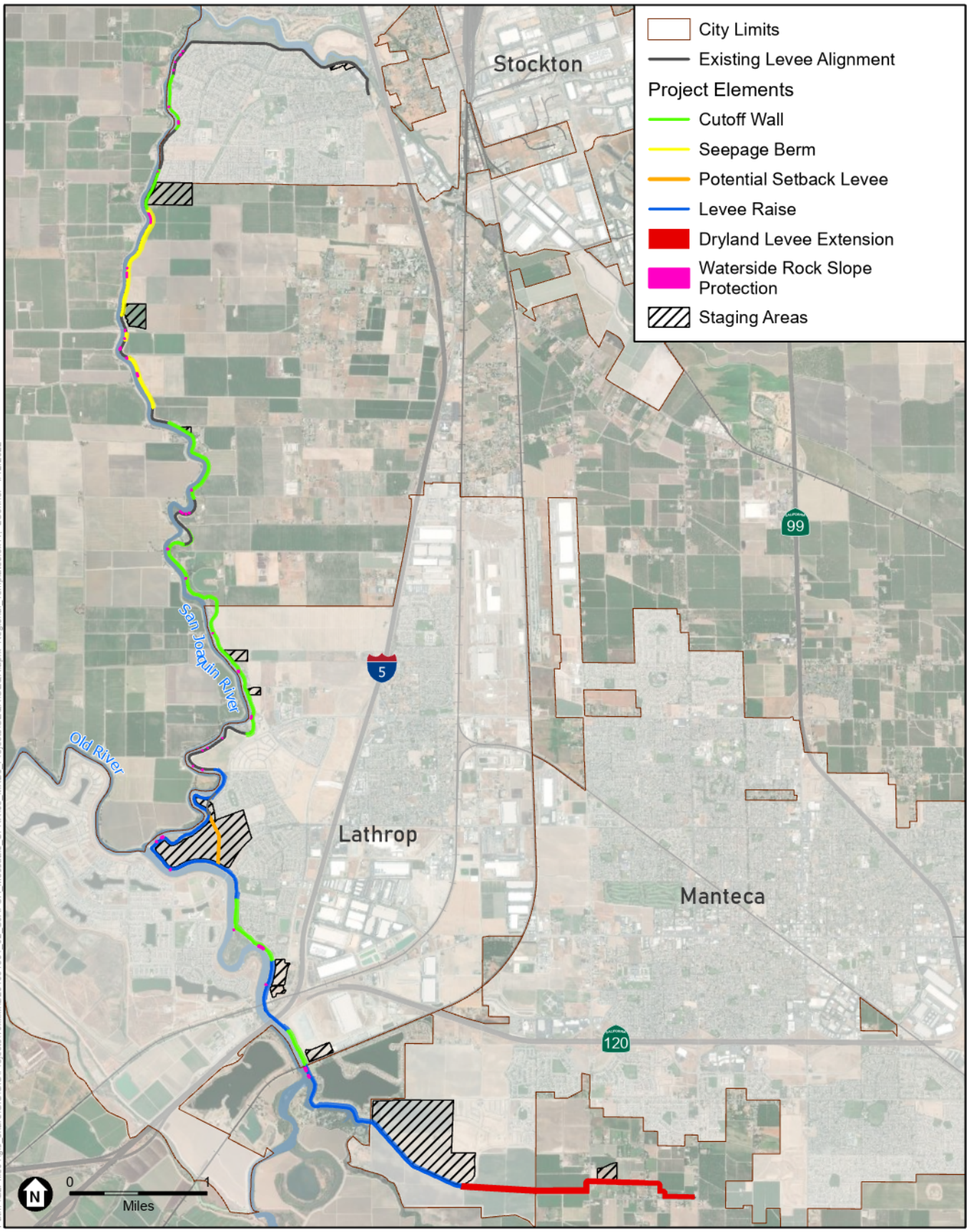


SOURCE: MAXAR, 2021; KSN, 2022; PBI, 2022; ESA, 2022

Mossdale Tract Area Urban Flood Risk Reduction Project

Figure 1
Mossdale Tract Area

ESA



SOURCE: MAXAR, 2021; KSN, 2022; PBI, 2022; ESA, 2022

Mossdale Tract Area Urban Flood Risk Reduction Project

Figure 2
Proposed Project Elements

ESA