For Immediate Release

August 24, 2021

**Funding Secured for Santa Venetia Levee System**

*Federal and state funds allocated to spur flood mitigation project into next phase*

San Rafael, CA – Thanks to newly identified funding, a crucial Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District project in the Santa Venetia neighborhood will soon move forward. The $6 million flood mitigation project will improve the levee system along Gallinas Creek, helping to protect the neighborhood from 100-year water surface elevation on the San Pablo Bay. The Flood District plans to begin the work on the levee system in November and to complete the effort by February 2023.

The Marin County Board of Supervisors and the Flood Control and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors stepped forward on August 24 to fund the levee upgrades, allocating approximately $1 million to close the project’s funding gap. The other funding sources for the project are a $3 million Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant and the prior pledge by the County of Marin for $840,000. About $1.2 million from Flood Zone 7’s fund balance will also be contributed to the overall cost. The FEMA grant is set to expire in early 2022, which prompted the County of Marin to provide the additional support.

On June 24, the Board of Supervisors approved a $682.6 million budget for fiscal year 2021-22 that included a package of one-time expenditures made possible by the federal American Rescue Plan stimulus funding, as well as increased state funding for counties due to increased state tax revenue.

Following a meeting by the Flood District Board of Supervisors on August 17, the Santa Venetia neighborhood’s perimeter levee system is one of the projects to benefit from the one-time expenditures. The levee system, built almost 40 years ago, was intended to protect the neighborhood from tidal flooding, but is now deteriorating. The upcoming project will implement structural levee improvements and reduce future maintenance costs by acquiring easements from the private properties along levee.

“We are fortunate to have one-time money available this year thanks to federal stimulus dollars and a robust state budget,” said Marin County District 1 Supervisor Damon Connolly, who represents the Santa Venetia neighborhood. “I see no better use for these extra dollars than protecting...”

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the homes and residents in our neighborhoods vulnerable to flooding.”

With the risk of tidal flooding in Santa Venetia increasing due to sea level rise and the deterioration of the existing levee, structural improvements will replace the current timber reinforced berm levee system with a more durable wood-composite structure one to two feet taller than the current berm. The new structure will be more deeply anchored, thereby improving its ability to hold back high tides. The location of the improved levee will roughly follow the same footprint as the existing structure. The rebuilt levee is projected to last until at least 2050.

“We have been planning this project for years, so we are ready to get started now that the funding is in place,” said Hannah Lee, Senior Civil Engineer for the Flood District. “We are in the process of purchasing easements from property owners along the levee to provide the access needed to rebuild the levee system and provide ongoing maintenance and inspection to keep the levee in good shape.”

A parcel tax measure in March came up just three votes short of the two-thirds approval needed to provide the final piece of funding for the project. Since then, local residents have applauded the County for stepping in to fill the funding gap before FEMA funding expires next year.

“It’s a relief to see this important project forward,” said Gina Hagen, President of the Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association. “Losing $3 million in FEMA funding would have been a tragedy, and we’re fortunate the County is in a position this year to step in and keep our neighborhood safe.”

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