



Santa Barbara County Public Works Department
Flood Control 💧 Water Agency 💧 Project Clean Water

April 28, 2021

City of Goleta Council
30 Cremona Drive, Suite B
Goleta, CA 93117

Re: Comment Letter for the Sywest Property - Additional Easement for Access to San Jose Creek on the May 4, 2021 City Council Meeting Agenda

Dear Council Members:

The Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) maintains the newly constructed portions of the San Jose Creek Channel with the exception of the fish-passage low-flow channel for which the City of Goleta (City) has responsibility for maintenance and function. In addition, the District undertakes dredging operations in San Jose Creek downstream of the channel for the benefit of the region.

Both the maintenance of the channel by the District and the City, and the dredging operations are critical to the containment of flood waters within the channel and the consequential reduction of flooding in Goleta Old Town. In 1961 and 1967, the District secured two easements from the property currently owned by Sywest, along the west side of San Jose Creek Channel. The two easements, totaling 20-feet in width, were acquired to allow access along the west side of the creek for purposes of channel maintenance and creek dredging operations.

In 2006 the City embarked, as the lead agency, in delivering the San Jose Creek Capacity Improvement and Fish-Passage Project. The District contributed \$5M towards the construction of the project which the first phase was completed in 2015. By increasing the capacity of the San Jose Creek Channel, this project has provided a significant reduction of flooding in Goleta Old Town. The channel capacity improvements upstream will be completed when the City delivers the Hollister Avenue Bridge Project. The channel capacity project eliminated an existing Flood Control access road that was located between the pre-existing channel and Route 217. The District used this access road for channel maintenance activities. The access road also connected to a ramp into the channel located opposite to the Sywest property. With the elimination of the access road and ramp on the east side of the channel, all future channel maintenance activities as well as continued dredging activities would have to occur from only the west side of San Jose Creek. With west side only access, the District requested that the City install a new ramp into the channel and secure additional width to the existing access road easements currently located on Sywest property. These requests were formalized in a 2010 Cooperative Agreement between the City

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and District, which defined the roles and responsibilities before, during and after completion of the channel capacity improvement project.

As part of the channel capacity improvement project, the City constructed a new ramp into the channel located adjacent to the Sywest property. The additional access easement is the matter before the City Council on its May 4, 2021 agenda. The District needs the additional width to the access road to allow construction equipment to pass each other safely. Currently there is insufficient width in the existing easements held by the District. It is imperative that the additional easement width is secured in order to allow cost effective and safe construction operations by both the City and the District within the channel as well as dredging operations downstream in the creek. The District has been working with the City's Public Works Department to define the extent of the additional easement required and we are comfortable with the easement dimensions defined in the Lease Agreement being considered by the City Council.

The District strongly urges the City to approve the proposed Lease Agreement with Sywest. Future emergency response, as well as routine maintenance activities will be impacted without the additional access proposed. Thank you for your consideration, and to your Public Works Department for working with the District on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thomas D. Fayram', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas D. Fayram, P.E.
Deputy Public Works Director
County of Santa Barbara Public Works