



City of East Palo Alto Proposition 1E IRWM Stormwater Flood Management Grant Application Runnymede Storm Drain Phase II and O'Connor Pump Station Outfall Project

Attachment 9 – Program Preferences

Attachment 9 is mandatory and must be no more than 10 pages in length using a minimum 10-point type font.

Submit a discussion on how the Proposal assists in meeting the Program Preference(s) described in Section II.F of the 2012 Guidelines. The discussion must identify the specific Program Preference(s) that the Proposal will meet; the certainty that the Proposal will meet the Program Preference(s); and the breadth and magnitude to which the Program Preference(s) will be met. Include graphics or maps as necessary to demonstrate how your proposal meets the preferences.

Introduction

This attachment describes how the Runnymede Storm Drain Phase II and O'Connor Pump Station Outfall Project (Runnymede Phase II) accomplishes the Program Preferences outlined in the 2012 Guidelines. The details provided in this attachment are directly linked to the project goals and objectives outlined in Attachment 3 – Work Plan and the performance measures detailed in Attachment 6 – Monitoring, Assessment, and Performance Measures.

PRC §75026(b) and CWC §10544 state that preference will be given to Proposals that:

Include Regional Projects or Programs (CWC §10544)

Although the Runnymede Phase II project is not in itself a regional project, Runnymede Phase II integrates with a regional flood management program that together improves flood protection and implements integrated flood management both locally in East Palo Alto and in the watershed. The City of East Palo Alto is located in the San Francisquito Creek watershed, described by the USGS as the “most inter-jurisdictionally complicated watershed in the Bay Area” (USGS, 2003). San Francisquito Creek has overtopped its levees during high rainfall events, most recently in February 1998, causing flooding not only in East Palo Alto but in other neighboring communities.

Due to the multiple management and maintenance needs of the San Francisquito Creek watershed, the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA) was established in 1999 between the cities of Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto, the County of San Mateo, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District following the 1998 flood event. The SFCJPA's goal, as stated on the agency website, is to “transform San Francisquito Creek from a diverse liability into a unifying asset”. The SFCJPA's regional flood risk reduction activities will impact neighboring communities in the San Francisquito Creek watershed, including the cities of Menlo Park, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Portola Valley and Woodside, as well as unincorporated areas of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, and Stanford University. The more local Runnymede Phase II complements the SFCJPA's regional project by providing long-term protection for the San Francisquito Creek watershed by improving the stormwater conveyance channel and minimizing flood damage in East Palo Alto.

Effectively Integrate Water Management Programs and Projects within a Hydrologic Region Identified in the California Water Plan; the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Regional or Subdivision; or Other Region or Sub-region Specifically Identified by DWR

The Runnymede Phase II project area is in the San Francisco Bay hydrologic region as identified in the California Water Plan and is overseen by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board-San Francisco Bay Region. The Runnymede Phase II project is included in a suite of projects currently being added to the Bay Area Integrated Regional Water Management (BAIRWM) Plan. The



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2013 Update to the BAIRWM Plan will include projects that integrate flood control, ecosystem restoration, and water quality management. In particular, the Runnymede Phase II project will address flood control at a local level to complement the regional flood control provided by the SFCJPA project, and other projects in the BAIRWM Plan.

Effectively Resolve Significant Water-related Conflicts Within or Between Regions

There are two primary mechanisms which cause flooding in East Palo Alto:

- San Francisquito Creek overtopping the existing levee during high tide
- High rainfall events and the insufficient capacity in the South Channel and Runnymede stormwater conveyance system creating a backup of flood water into the storm drain collection system and adjacent City streets.

In order to effectively resolve the flooding issue, both flooding mechanisms must be managed.

The SFCJPA allows neighboring agencies, cities and counties to work collaboratively to find solutions to the creek flooding problem, with a common goal of managing the potential flood damage caused by levee overtopping. However, the SFCJPA will only address the flooding created by the San Francisquito Creek. By being an active participant in the local effort to address flooding, the City of East Palo Alto will address the second cause of flooding by increasing the capacity of the Runnymede stormwater conveyance system.

The Runnymede Phase II project effectively addresses a significant water-related conflict within the region by addressing current and future risks associated with flooding caused by the stormwater conveyance system. By improving and maintaining the existing flood management system, the Runnymede Phase II project allows the City of East Palo Alto to continue to effectively participate in collaborative flood management of the San Francisquito Creek.

Contribute to Attainment of One or More of the Objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

The Runnymede Phase II project is not within the geographic sphere of the CALFED Bay-Delta program. As such, the project does not achieve the objectives of the Bay-Delta program.

Water Quality

This project does not address CALFED's Water Quality objective.

Levees

Though this project includes improvements to a local berm which will limit the potential for flooding in East Palo Alto, the Runnymede Phase II project in itself does not address the CALFED objective to improve the Delta's levee system.

Water Supply

This project does not address CALFED's Water Supply objective.



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Ecosystem Restoration

As part of the environmental mitigation for the Runnymede Phase II project, a wetlands ecosystem restoration project will be implemented off-site and on-site revegetation will occur. The ecosystem restoration will include revegetation and restoration of wetlands as salt marsh habitat which will provide high value habitat for multiple plant and wildlife species, such as the endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.

Address critical water supply or water quality needs of Disadvantaged Communities within the region

Appendix B of the 2012 Guidelines defines Disadvantaged Community (DAC) as “a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the Statewide annual median household income (PRC §65040.12(e)).” According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the City of East Palo Alto Median Household Income (MHI) was approximately \$47,964. The MHI for all of California is \$60,392 and 80% of the statewide MHI is \$48,314. Therefore, the City of East Palo Alto qualifies as a DOC.

The Runnymede Phase II project addresses a critical need in the DAC of East Palo Alto. The project will implement multiple components in order to address current insufficient flood management systems. By increasing the capacity of the conveyance channel, the stormwater conveyance system will allow adequate drainage and storage of stormwater during a potential flood event. By eliminating the potential for flooding, the Project will effectively manage the threat of flooding to habitable dwellings, and associated repair costs, in the City of East Palo Alto.

Effectively integrate water management with land use planning

The City of East Palo Alto recognizes that the intended land use of the existing City layout, primarily commercial and residential, is in conflict with its low elevation resulting in a tendency to flood. In order to address this conflict, the proposal for the Runnymede Phase II project achieves the overall purpose of aligning the existing land use with its intended function by limiting the potential for flooding. The City's residential neighborhoods lie within the 100-year floodplain, creating an immediate need to address threats of flooding. The Runnymede Phase II project will address the potential for local flooding with infrastructure improvements while the City is concurrently participating in the San Francisquito Creek JPA to address flooding from a regional water management perspective.

The Project will limit the instances on incidental flooding due to inadequate capacity in the conveyance channel, which can lead to channel over-topping and associated conveyance system backup. Proper execution of the project will provide adequate protection against potential future flooding into adjacent residential areas.

For eligible SWFM funding, projects which: a) are not receiving State funding for flood control or flood prevention projects pursuant to PRC §5096.824 or §75034 or b) provide multiple benefits, including, but not limited to, water quality improvements, ecosystem benefits, reduction of instream erosion and sedimentation, and groundwater recharge.

The Runnymede Phase II project provides multiple benefits achieved from applying SWFM funding to a disadvantaged community. The project includes an off-site wetlands ecosystem restoration



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project as part of the environmental mitigation, allowing the minimal environmental impacts of the project to be addressed elsewhere in the San Francisco Bay area. Additionally, by installing the remaining portions of the precast box culvert and energy dissipating materials at the northern end of the South Channel, the project achieves a reduction in sediment by reducing the high velocity and associated erosion in the channel. Finally, the project will include raising the existing berm and seeding it with native grasses to encourage propagation of wildlife, including the endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.

Although several of these benefits are not directly included as project objectives, the Runnymede project achieves several benefits as indirect side effects of implementation.

Address statewide priorities (Table 1 established the specific Statewide Priorities for the IRWM Grant Program.)

Drought Preparedness

This priority does not apply as flood management is not directly linked to drought preparedness.

Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently

This priority does not apply, as flood management, is not directly linked to efficient water use and reuse.

Climate Change Response Actions

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, climate change will affect future precipitation patterns and storm events. With these imminent changes forecasted but still unpredictable, projects that address climate change and include response actions to the effects of climate change achieve multiple goals. The Runnymede Phase II project successfully responds to the anticipated future effects of climate change, which include higher rainfall events, by limiting the potential instances of flooding in East Palo Alto.

As stated in the 2012 Guidelines, planning projects that address climate change impacts on flood management include significant challenges. In particular, developing flood management projects has a significant benefit to public health and safety. It is clear that climate change will impact the frequency and strength of local storms. The likelihood of increased rainfall variability will be inherently linked to an increase in flooding potential of residential dwellings if the current infrastructure is not adapted to changing needs. If the Runnymede project is not implemented, effects of flooding could negatively impact public health and safety by allowing flood waters to continue to enter homes.

Expand Environmental Stewardship

One of the environmental mitigation measures for the Runnymede Phase II project includes an off-site wetlands ecosystem restoration project. The restoration project will improve the local ecosystem by implementing projects in the South San Francisco Bay. The project itself will reduce the potential for introducing surface contaminants into the San Francisquito Creek. Additionally, the berm which will be topped by dredged material will also be seeded with a grassland seed mix to encourage growth of local vegetation and provide habitat for multiple species, including the endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.



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Practice Integrated Flood Management

One of the significant benefits of the Runnymede Phase II project is integration with the regional San Francisquito Creek JPA projects. The SFCJPA was developed with the intention of regionally governing the San Francisquito Creek watershed. The SFCJPA aims to develop a plan for the Creek that will allow both the effective use of a natural resource as well as protecting the neighboring communities from the potential of flooding. The Runnymede Phase II Project is inherently linked to the goals of the SFCJPA since the system drains into the San Francisquito Creek. Benefits realized through the Runnymede Phase II project will provide additional local flood protection to the City of East Palo Alto in addition to those provided by the regional projects being completed by the SFCJPA.

Protect Surface Water and Groundwater Quality

The Runnymede Phase II project protects local water surface and groundwater quality by improving the effectiveness of the O'Connor pond and the proper management of stormwater. The project includes the addition of energy dissipation materials to the outfall structure constructed in Phase I which will prevent excess erosion further downstream. Furthermore, the Project will improve the conveyance channel and O'Connor pond by dredging excess sediment from the bottom. The O'Connor pond will continue to provide natural, wetlands treatment of low flow event storm water prior to discharge into the San Francisquito Creek and then San Francisco Bay. These measures are essential to safeguarding the integrity and operation of the Runnymede stormwater conveyance system and the O'Connor pond and pump station.

Improve Tribal Water and Natural Resources

This priority does not apply as there are no Native American tribes recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in East Palo Alto as described on the BIA website at <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/RegionalOffices/Pacific/index.htm>.

Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits

The Project enlists the participation of a disadvantaged community in the development and execution of the flood management program, ensuring a more equitable distribution of benefits. Since 2005, when the City of East Palo Alto assumed management of the storm drainage facilities from San Mateo County, the City has actively pursued funding to mitigate the flooding conditions resulting in completion of Runnymede Phase I project described in Attachment 3. The Runnymede Phase II project continues the efforts initiated by the City and is a critical project that will address flood management in the City of East Palo Alto and adjacent San Francisquito Creek watershed. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has committed funds to implement the Runnymede Project, ensuring that federal funds are applied to projects led by disadvantaged communities.

In addition, the City of East Palo Alto has continued to participate in regional planning projects that will benefit the local and neighboring communities. The City has been an active participant in the development of the Bay Area IRWM Plan, which includes the Runnymede Phase II project in the 2013 Update. Moreover, the City's participation in the San Francisquito Creek JPA illustrates the cooperation of the City in regional efforts.