



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 6/27/2023

File #: 23-839

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Public Works

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Resolution Authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to Apply for, and Accept, Grant Funding Made Available by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Development of a Project Study Report Regarding Options for Alleviating Road Flooding at Three Sites in Elk River

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the attached resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to apply for, and, if awarded, accept, grant funding made available by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for the development of a project study report regarding options for alleviating road flooding at three (3) sites in Elk River; and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to return a fully executed certified copy of the attached resolution to the Humboldt County Department of Public Works for submission to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Road Fund (1200)

DISCUSSION:

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (“Regional Water Board”) is facilitating various efforts aimed at improving conditions within the Elk River watershed and restoring beneficial uses of water within Elk River for residents and ecosystem health. Areas of focus include reducing erosion, remediating deposited sediment, restoring natural sediment transport processes, enhancing habitat quality, and reducing undesirable flooding. A draft document entitled “Elk River Watershed Stewardship Program: Sediment Remediation and Habitat Rehabilitation Recovery Plan” was released in July 2022 (available at

<https://caltrout.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Elk-River-Stewardship-Recovery-Plan-Public-Draft->

[July_2022.pdf](#)>). Multiple phases of restoration projects are in various stages of design and environmental review.

Several locations on county-maintained and private roads in Elk River experience significant flooding multiple times per year and in some cases become impassable. The Regional Water Board has offered funding to the County of Humboldt in the amount of \$100,000 to prepare a technical study that identifies options for reducing flooding impacts near Berta Road, Zanes Road, and Elk River Road (near Post-Mile 3.3). If a grant is awarded, the Humboldt County Department of Public Works intends to prepare a Project Study Report (“PSR”) that analyzes the flooding conditions and identifies feasible improvement projects that would eliminate or reduce flooding at the three (3) identified locations. The PSR would include conceptual designs and budgetary cost estimates and would provide the technical basis for pursuing funding sources to implement the identified projects.

The suitability of project concepts will depend on the specific circumstances where road flooding is occurring. For roads located within the floodplain, some level of flooding is inevitable. Road improvement projects could potentially reduce the frequency, duration, and/or magnitude of flooding. Project concepts include raising the road embankment; constructing a causeway; installing culverts to improve drainage; or raising bridges or bridge approaches. Another potential project concept is trying to improve drainage in the vicinity of existing roads (outside the right-of-way) so that floodwaters drain quicker. Road improvement projects would be evaluated based on a variety of criteria, such as effectiveness, feasibility, tradeoffs or adverse impacts, cost (for construction and maintenance), funding availability, and timeliness.

Public Works intends to engage with adjacent property owners and convene or participate in at least one (1) community meeting to solicit public input on the study. Public Works also intends to incorporate the results from computer-based hydraulic modeling developed for Elk River and other technical studies currently in progress. Potential road improvements would need to be carefully designed with an understanding of planned restoration projects and expected future river conditions.

The Regional Water Board requires grantees to adopt a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of a grant agreement, and any future amendments thereto, along with any and all other documents required or deemed necessary or appropriate to secure and accept such funding and/or complete the proposed project. Accordingly, Public Works recommends that the Board adopt the attached resolution (Attachment 1) which authorizes Public Works Deputy-Director, Hank Seemann, or a designee thereof, to apply for, and, if awarded, accept, grant funding made available by the Regional Water Board.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The proposed grant amount is \$100,000 which would include \$12,000 for Public Works staff and \$88,000 for professional services. A cost-share is not required, and staff time will be reimbursed up to the grant amount. If costs exceed the grant amount, then those excess costs would be funded by the County Road Fund. Revenue from the proposed grant was incorporated into the proposed FY 2023-24 budget (revenue line 1200331-4510 and expenditure line 1200331-2118).

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Framework.

Core Roles: Provide for and maintain infrastructure

New Initiatives: Seek outside funding sources to benefit Humboldt County needs

Strategic Plan: 2.1 - Improve transportation network to be properly-maintained, multi-modal and energy efficient (e.g. roads, trails, public transportation and commercial airline)

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board of Supervisors could choose not to approve the attached resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to apply for, and, if awarded, accept, grant funding made available by the Regional Water Board for the development of a Project Study Report in Elk River. However, this alternative is not recommended because it would limit efforts to make improvements to county roads and associated drainage features that would address important public safety concerns.

ATTACHMENTS:

1 Resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to apply for, and accept, grant funding made available by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for the development of a Project Study Report to analyze options for reducing flooding impacts at Berta Road, Zanes Road, and Elk River Road near Post-Mile 3.3

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A