

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: X Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 222
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: City of Murrieta
1 Town Square
Murrieta, CA 92562

X County Clerk
County of Riverside
2724 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507

Project Title: Murrieta Creek Master Drainage Plan Line-E (MDP Line-E)

Project Location - City/Community: Murrieta

Project Location - County: Riverside

Project Location: The MDP Line-E Project is located within the City of Murrieta in Riverside County. The project boundary begins at the storm drain outlet underneath Washington Avenue at approximately 33°32'58.59"N, 117°12'36.10"W and extends approximately 1,415 feet. The project ends at approximately 33°32'48.16"N, 117°12'49.98"W where the channel flows into the inlet under New Clay Street. The project area is located within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Murrieta Quadrangle, Township 7 South, Range 3 West and ranges across APNs: 909-080-078, 909-080-080, 909-080-088, and 909-080-003. The associated parcels are all under City ownership

Project Description:

Area 1 – Main Channel

The main channel area starts at Washington Avenue where a closed underground storm drain converts into an approximately 1,415 foot long unlined earthen channel. The earthen channel flows into a reinforced concrete box culvert underneath New Clay Street before discharging into Murrieta Creek. The box culvert is lined with a riprap armored apron for energy dissipation and erosion control. When the earthen channel was originally constructed, the design plans intended for the channel to be revegetated with native grassland species. A four foot swath of native grass was to be planted along the channel invert, while the remainder of the channel bed and banks were to be maintained free of vegetation to preserve hydrologic capacity.

Current conditions differ substantially from the original design intent. The channel now supports emergent wetland vegetation buffered by a mature riparian forest and scrub community. Dominant riparian species include willow (*Salix spp.*), cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*). Of particular concern, dense stands of cattails have become established in the channel invert and are expanding toward the banks. These stands are reducing conveyance capacity and causing water to pond during the dry season, leading to stagnant conditions.

Routine maintenance is required to manage the spread of cattails and maintain intended channel function. Cattail population control will primarily involve selective application of aquatic-approved herbicides. In addition, periodic vegetation management may also be needed to limit overgrowth of mature willows and cottonwoods along the banks to ensure adequate flood conveyance and reduce fuel loads.

Area 2 – Conservation Area

The conservation area consists of 400 feet long by 119 feet wide unmaintained earthen channel that was revegetated with native riparian species. This portion of the channel was designed to be a low-flow meandering drainage course adjacent to the main channel. Although the conservation area does not have an official conservation easement, vegetation within this area will be protected in place and no vegetation removal, trimming, or thinning is proposed. The only maintenance activity planned for this area is the selective application of herbicides to manage and control the expansion of cattail populations and non-native/invasive species.

Public Agency Approving Project: City of Murrieta

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Murrieta

Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080 (b) (1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency 15269;
- ☐ Emergency Project 15269 (c);
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State Type and Section Number: -15301 - Existing Facilities
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State Code Number: 15061

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: This activity is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to the Class 1 Categorical Exemption as described in Section 15301(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Class 1 (Existing Facilities) Exemption allows for the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The Project involves routine maintenance of an existing, publicly owned flood control facility. Maintenance work will consist of general vegetation management, sediment control, and overall facility upkeep, and it will not expand the existing use beyond the original design limits. As such, work as proposed is consistent with the Class 1 Exemption.

The exceptions to the exemptions outlined in Section 15300.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines do not preclude the use of the categorical exemption identified in this Notice. As such, no further environmental analysis is warranted.

Lead Agency: City of Murrieta

Lead Agency Signature:


Jarrett Ramaiya

Deputy Development Services Director

Date:

09/17/26