Public Hearing Recorded Comments
Corte Madera Creek Flood Risk Management Project

>>I am Sandy Guldman representing Friends of the Corte Madera
Creek Watershed. We support this project mainly for its environmental benefits, the fish passage barrier that the fish ladder and the concrete channel provide have really caused major problems to the salmonid population in the creek, so getting rid of that chunk of the concrete channel is a very big deal, and the fish ladder. We would like more analysis of the remaining part of the concrete channel. There are fish resting pools along probably the upper two thirds of it. The place where the concrete channel will be removed takes out the most challenging of those but some remain, so we would like to see a more detailed analysis of fish passage and also the issue of temperature and predation within the concrete channel. And apropos the concrete channel, it's old. We would like to see some discussion of its structural integrity. I mean, after almost 50 years, should it be replaced maybe instead of having walls added on top? That is something that's not addressed. I would like to say that this is a feasibility analysis so I think requesting, I mean asking questions that require 100% design is unrealistic. And we don't expect that level of detail, but we would like to see this project move forward. It would be a huge benefit to the environment. Not to mention, reducing flooding which is environmentally damaging in and of itself. Thank you.

>> Greetings, my name is Zoe Vavrek, and I am here just like the Lorax spoke for the trees, I am here to speak for the fish. I am also here speaking as a member of the environmental and social justice based learning community called SEA-DISC at Drake High School. And I want to start off by saying thank you for letting us as the community voice our opinions. First off I want to acknowledge the fact that you have improved the goals of this project by putting in that improving the salmon habitats is in your goals but I still think that throughout the plan it needs to be improved. Secondly, I think that you should not put any parts of the creek underground as riparian corridors should be easily reachable by all animals as they serve as a source of water, food, shelter, and safe travel for many species, including those endangered such as the yellow-legged frog, coho salmon and steelhead trout. My third point is that also against the putting of the creek underground. Sunlight is vital to the aquatic ecosystems as it is a key role in photosynthesis and providing a variety of shelter for fish. Creeks should be daylighted not put underground. Lastly, I'm strongly against the section of the plan where all trees within 15 feet of the creek will be removed in order to put flood barriers. This is because, as all of us should know, trees provide many vital roles for riparian ecosystems such as shade to keep oxygen levels ideal for fish. When the trees are removed the water will warm, oxygen supply will shrink, and these endangered species, such as steelhead trout, will be gone as we know it. As a student who has studied this thoroughly through the riparian habitat and the water quality standpoint, in fact this is an 81 page paper that I did in school on this in SEA-DISC, I urge you to make these changes to ensure future generations of healthy riparian habitats. Thank you.

>>Hello Garril Page, San Anselmo.
Why are the problems that deserve top priority left out of the Corps selected alternative? This is one mile of concrete channel described by the County and the Department of Water Resources as seismically unsafe. The top 850 feet flow at super critical speed like a

toilet, flushing all sediment downstream to meet tidal action at Kentfield Rehab Hospital where salt water intrusion and marine life erode the concrete walls, increase roughness and turbulence and slow the flow. The slope break above the College Avenue Bridge is a hole where sediment collects decreasing channel capacity and causing backwater and overtopping into Ross and Kentfield. More slowing at the S-curve ends with bedload and a delta affect the blocks drainage conduits from surrounding neighborhoods in Kentfield, Greenbrae, and Larkspur. The Corps' selected Alternative J solves none of this. It creates a canyon in Ross for which there is no landscaping budget, unfunded sewer relocations, and destroys 2000 feet of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. It's no secret that the Corps channel was not constructed in accordance with the original hydraulic design. This is in the county files, the Corps knows it, and we know it. The location of the first flood outbreak above the College Avenue Bridge continues to prove the point. Stetson's 2018 sediment study reconfirmed it. Units three and two are not complete. The Corps must fix this. Support Alternative J and you throw Ross, Kentfield, Greenbrae, and Larkspur under the bus where they can join the Fairfax and San Anselmo residents, newly flooded as a result of your last flood project vote.

>> Bill Conrow of Ross.
Unlike the last comments, my comments will based not on the scientific studies, but based on enjoying and living in Ross. It's hard for me to make a comment, if I could have the photo or the slide up there showing area three that would be very helpful. There is one that shows the underground bypass. Yeah well okay, over on the left. I think that somebody stated that it's going to be 30 feet wide and 16 or 17 feet high. I may be off a foot or two, but I am wondering how wide is Sir Francis Drake? When you consider 30 feet wide. Okay, so my concern is that living there and enjoying the beauty and everything of Ross, I drive down the street and I see beautiful old trees all along Sir Francis Drake probably at least a couple hundred years old, they're huge and even without a 15-foot setback requirement, many of those trees would be killed. And, if you add to that the 15-foot requirement, we are going to have a great many trees that are going to die. So instead of driving into a beautiful area with green trees lining the road we're going to drive into an area that is basically dead. It's not going to be pretty. If we plant new trees, yes in another 100 years or so we could have big trees, but I just think this Alternative J is truly a disaster. Not to the federal government, not to the people who are constructing the project, I mean, I'm sorry, they don't care about the beauty and living there, etc. We do. I just think it is a terrible alternative. Thank you.

>> Thank you for the opportunity to address the board. My name is Bradley O'Connell of Ross.
I would like to speak to the impact of the proposed project, especially Alternative J, on the group of properties on the north side of the creek on Sir Francis Drake, so between Sir Francis Drake and the creek downstream of the bridge in the area of the concrete channel. And I would like to talk about three specific areas in which there is a disproportionate impact which in our view is not adequately addressed at all in the draft EIR/EIS.

First, the extent of disruption from almost any iteration of the project, but especially from Alternative J. Let me identify specifically where we are. Our property is immediately downstream of the parcel of county land in which under Alternative J the proposed bypass

will reenter the creek. Also, as I understand it, both that parcel immediately adjacent to us, and the county land between us and the creek, and between other properties in the creek is going to be a staging area for the overall project. I understand that not all the engineering details are in place now, but the problem is, this goes to the extent of the disruption. And quite frankly, how long, and to what extent our property and several other properties will be essentially rendered unlivable during the construction phase of the project. And 300 days is a long time and I am not even confident it will be kept to 300 days. And so, the disruption, especially of the bypass, and this 30 foot ditch that's going to be dug alongside our project, alongside our property and throughout Sir Francis Drake is item number one.

Item number two is echoing the last speaker, is failure to adequately address the loss of the wooded area between the creek and the homes on Francis Drake. Currently, there is a rise, and atop that is a whole strip of fairly mature trees. We are not just talking shrubbery. We are talking a habitat that has been in place there for many years. Under the plan, and unfortunately under most versions of the plan, that's going to be denuded, it's going to be deforested because of these setback standards so that in place of what right now is a beautiful wooded area, we are going to have a desert. And there are three impacts to that. First, most obviously, is we are losing the natural habitat. Number two there is the aesthetic impact and I disagree strongly with the characterization of Alternative J as not having a significant aesthetic impact. Number three, there is also a grave resulting loss of privacy for the residents in this strip because now across the creek, the bike path and the area of the post office, people will be able to look across the creek directly into the yards and the homes of the people along this stretch, whereas now, we have this zone of privacy and we have a beautiful view.

Finally, let me address the two aspects of flooding. We've been here long enough that we lived through the 2005 flood as well as the more recent two near floods in early 2017. The floodwaters converge from two directions, only one of which is being addressed here. There is significant flooding coming across, drainage coming across Francis Drake trying to make its way to the creek. But, if we're going to have a floodwall there that drainage is not going to find its way into the creek. It is going to get backed up in the area of these properties. The second flooding concerned that I will mention, and I'm not a hydrologist, but the bypass is going to take a large volume of water, divert it, and then input it into the creek immediately upstream from our home and those of several other people. And, I think that gives good cause for concern that, at least for these properties, rather than reduce the flood risk, it may well enhance it. So I appreciate the board hearing me out and thank you.

>> Hi, I am Beth Foster.
I live at 19 Sir Francis Drake. So, on that map, my property is between Sir Francis Drake and the concrete channel being wrapped by that blue bypass line. So, my property actually extends to the centerline of the creek, so I own some of the property where the channel will be removed and some of the construction is being proposed. The fish ladder is immediately upstream of my property and the staging area that Brad described is immediately downstream. I do want to say first that I am grateful for this process that is in place. I think that addressing flooding is imperative, and I think that's important for the broader community for my property. So in the big picture, this is important. I do have a

general concern that the EIR lacks sufficient detail to understand the impacts on my property and I fear that there may be many impacts. Some of the questions that I feel are not addressed completely in the EIR I will cover quickly and Brad described them in more detail. One is the question about drainage back into the creek from Sir Francis Drake and upstream from my property when a floodwall is constructed. Another is the aesthetic impacts from the vegetation removal and construction of the wall. Another is loss of livable area behind my home. Another is the privacy impact. There is a potential loss of property value, or at this point an unknown in that respect, and certainly impacts from noise. I have been told there will be more detail provided over time, I've heard that several times but the remainder the process isn't clear to me right now and so being asked to comment on many facets of this EIR without feeling like I have enough information to do that which puts me in a difficult position. I'm hopeful that I'll have an opportunity to work with the District or the Corps, I am not sure, on more specific details of the project. I would like to know when this will take place, and specifically, whether someone will approach me about the fact that this project is taking place on my property. I will be submitting a letter with more specific questions. Thank you.

>> Good evening, my name is Michael Caloon.
And while I feel that some of my comments might be fairly unpopular at this point, I just sort of want to take a few minutes to propose a reorientation philosophically of how we approach these types of projects and sort of thinking about protecting biological resources for future generations and sort of in line with public trust doctrine in which our elected officials are trustees to a public trust that is not only serving stakeholders and private landowners that, you know, regardless I mean when you look, they are sort of out of line with natural law. We have structures built in a floodplain and at some point there's no solution to having structures built in a floodplain. And I believe that as trustees of a public trust you all have a responsibility to not just look at current economic analyses and current stakeholders right now, but much in line with future generations way down the line and what is this ecosystem going to look like for our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. And is this really a short-term bandaid? Are they looking at what our future creek ecosystems should look like? Are we making a long-term plan for a sustainable community? And I do believe that in line with public trust doctrine it is a responsibility of elected officials to take this into consideration. Thank you.

>> Good evening, President Connolly and members of the Flood Control Board. Rich Simonitch, Public Works Director for the Town of Ross. First, I would like to thank the Flood Control Board, flood control staff, DPW, Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board for all the work that they have done to date to provide increased flood protection to both the Town of Ross and Ross Valley. The Town also appreciates the extensive work that flood control staff has done in the public outreach, providing valuable information over the past several months. The Town realizes that the release of this document is a significant and necessary step towards achieving any flood risk reduction improvement project in our town. However, we have very significant concerns about the deficiency and the level of information and analysis provided in the document. And in response we have prepared an extensive comment letter for consideration by the Flood Control Board and the Army Corps of Engineers. So tonight's statement is more of a matter of record and you don't have to take my testimony as the Town's comment. The Town staff is very concerned that

the document, the draft EIS/EIR, does not provide sufficient project-related information to access and analyze all of the environmental impacts associated with Alternative J. Other than referencing a riparian corridor that would be constructed in Frederick Allen Park, the draft EIS/EIR falls short in providing project details, project renderings, project plans, information on grading, landscaping, tree removal, tree replacement, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation. The Town staff is also concerned that the draft EIS/EIR does not provide adequate information regarding the impacts from the following: the flood benefits of Alternative J are unclear if only a portion the alternative is constructed, such as the removal of the fish ladder, Allen Park, and the Granton Park floodwalls. More detail and specific information regarding the cost, timing, scope, and various significant impacts, and possible alternatives to the proposed Sir Francis Drake bypass culvert. Construction-related impacts due to impacting traffic circulation and staging and parking within the Town, noise impacting residents and businesses. And importantly, the Town of Ross's role as a landowner seems to be left out of the document in consideration. We ask that you recognize the Town of Ross as the approval and permitting authority for multiple items presented within this document. Prior to the certification of the final EIS/EIR the Town will seek to enter into an agreement with the Marin County Flood Control District related to the project design, construction, and maintenance of the Frederick Allen Park Riparian Corridor. In addition to addressing the likely need for temporary and permanent easements, liability, and indemnity. In addition the Town will seek as part of any agreement a requirement that sufficient detail regarding the scope and design of Frederick Allen Park Riparian Corridor, be analyzed in the final EIS/EIR so that the Town can tier subsequent land use approvals on the final environmental document. Our intent here is not only to protect Town assets, infrastructure, and the interests of our residents but also to ensure a pathway to success such that the final EIS/EIR document can withstand the level of scrutiny and challenges that residents of Marin County in the past have reported flood control projects. Thank you.

>>Good evening, my name is Charles Goodman, former mayor of Ross, served 12 years on the Town Council. Also a 50-year resident of Ross, living on Corte Madera Creek. I'm not going to go back through and repeat what a number of the people have stated, especially Garol Page or Rich Simonitch from the Town of Ross I would like to add one comment, it's more of a question in that in the San Anselmo Project which was just approved coming into Ross says we will have a 25-year level of flood protection and yet, in the Corps project, we need to have two culverts that are 7 feet x 12 feet in order to achieve 25-year level of flood protection. So my question is, I'm going to flood if these two culverts aren't added to the Town of Ross, and of course I don't want to even see the two culverts come into the Town of Ross. So I don't understand why the first project got approved based on being told that Ross would have a 25-year level of flood protection when clearly, the Corps is saying we don't. So if anybody has any questions I would be very happy to talk to them at a later date. The staff has my address and everything. Thank you.

>>Thank you members of Board of Supervisors, my name is Connor Kidd.
I live at 11 Sir Francis Drake. As a couple of my neighbors have spoken, both Beth and Brad, I share their concerns in terms of privacy, aesthetics, if you wouldn't mind putting 3-5c back up please. But I do want to reiterate the point that has been made around the

level of detail, I know it has been made a number of times. But on this specific graph, it doesn't have it here, but the scale on EIR is 1 inch x 200 feet, so 25 feet is an eighth of an inch, and the way this drawing is drawn, some of these lines are actually on my house. So, this level of detail causes some anxiety and anxiousness amongst the residents and it is difficult for us to assess the impacts that we will experience on our property, so that's one other thing that I just wanted to reiterate that I think has been made a number of times but I wanted to highlight it again. And specifically, I think it would be helpful if we could request a verbal description of set back because in this diagram it is difficult to assess where the county property ends and where my property is and so it would be helpful if we could request a verbal description in the EIR of a determined setback from private property to when the actual flood creek walls would begin. I think that would be helpful at least giving an idea of what the project is going to have an impact on. And then, Brad hit on it a little bit, but I want to mention it again, in terms of socioeconomic impacts, it's kind of crazy to say, but those of us that live right here on Sir Francis Drake, we have probably the lowest home values in all of Ross, yet we are being asked to bear the brunt of this project. And it is not really captured in the EIR/EIS, but I wanted to note that there is socioeconomic impact and while we are in an affluent community there is a disproportionate impact on those with basically the least values of property in town. Thank you.

>> Hello, my name is Anne Petersen.
I sit on the Kentfield Planning Advisory Board, but tonight, I am speaking personally, because our Board is not going to hear this until tomorrow, so you'll get written comments from the Board itself tomorrow. Personally, I am glad to see the project moving forward. We know how badly Granton Park has flooded recently and we are hopeful that a positive flood control project can come out of this. There’s a couple of areas in Kentfield that I think need really a thorough looksee and those are the two bridges. One is I guess you’d call it student services bridge and the second one is the College Avenue Bridge. Both of those bridges are low. And if water is going to be funneled, stay in the creek from San Anselmo, stay in the creek from Ross, it’s going to come down and stay in, be moved through the park, and stay in the creek, it's not going into go into Granton Park now, it's going to supposedly stay in the creek, it’s going have to flow at a higher cubic feet per second to get underneath those bridges, and I was at a College Board meeting today, they did not have the finances to raise their bridge and so, their bridge is not a part of the plan to be raised, so I think with those two bridges really you ought to look at them very carefully to make sure that they are adequate for what is going to be coming down the pipe. It is nice to see Granton Park being protected and also, I just think that you ought to look really good at Alternative F. I know Alternative J is the project of choice right now, but you ought to also consider Alternative F, because possibly there is some more funding down the path that might be able to open up the channel a little wider at the College and improve the riparian habitat there so you shouldn't just ignore it because maybe it could happen. Thank you very much, I appreciate all of the effort that you're putting into this.

>> Good evening, supervisors. My name is Chris Martin, and I am from Ross. I am grateful that, after all of these years, this project is progressing. Pages ES-6 and Appendix J describe the construction of the Sir Francis Drake bypass associated with Alternatives F and J which include, of course, as we heard trenching and backfilling of box culverts.

Please consider the feasibility of using a tunneled boring machine to accomplish the bypass and minimizing the impact to traffic and noise. Tunneled boring machines, also called moles, can bore through hard rock and sand. Tunnel diameters range from 2 feet to over 48 feet. San Jose recently used a micro tunnel boring machine to install a number of gravity flow sewer lines as large as 8 feet in diameter. These machines have the advantages of limiting the disturbance to the surrounding ground and producing a smooth tunneled wall. Thank you.