



COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
105 E. Anapamu St., Room 406 • Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-3400 • FAX (805) 568-3414  
www.countyofsb.org

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

### **News Media Contact:**

William Boyer, Communications Director  
(805) 568-3400  
[wboyer@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:wboyer@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Editor's Note: For project specific information, please contact Tom Fayram, Deputy Director, Santa Barbara County Public Works Department, (805) 568-3440, or Thomas Conti, Project Engineer, City of Santa Barbara, (805) 564-5383. For questions about railroad operations, please call Union Pacific Railroad Company, Zoe Richmond, Director, Media Relations, (916) 789-6019. Photo of the massive concrete culvert sections available on request.***

### **Lower Mission Creek Flood Control Project Begins; Railroad Culvert is First Step in Multi-Phase Construction Project**

The first phase of the long-awaited Lower Mission Creek Flood Control Project begins January 25 with construction of a massive concrete box culvert under the Union Pacific Railroad train tracks near the Santa Barbara Train Depot. The \$1.3 million project is a joint effort by the County of Santa Barbara, the City of Santa Barbara and the Union Pacific Railroad Company.

Construction of the culvert will be performed by the Union Pacific Railroad and all costs for the construction will be paid by the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District. Completing the box culvert under the railroad tracks is difficult and time critical, but the entire Lower Mission Creek Flood Control Project is not feasible without this first phase, said Tom Fayram, Deputy Director of the Santa Barbara County Public Works Department.

"This critical phase would not be possible without the cooperation and assistance of Union Pacific Railroad," Fayram said. "It's an important first step that finally gets this project going."

Union Pacific plans to close the rail line to freight and Amtrak passenger service starting at 6:00 a.m., Sunday, Jan. 25, and to re-open the line by 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 27. During this time, railroad crews will cut the tracks, excavate the area and place large concrete culvert sections below the railroad bed. Once the culvert is constructed, restoration of the tracks will begin and, when complete, rail traffic will resume operations.

The project calls for 30 massive pieces of concrete "box culverts" to be installed and linked together, forming two parallel tubes that create a diversion channel near the train depot and Chapala Street to siphon off flood waters from Mission Creek. Each concrete piece looks like a giant ring that weighs up to 47 tons each and measures about 21 feet wide, 9.3 feet tall and 6 feet long. When complete, both parallel lines will be about 85 feet long. In total, the 30 pre-cast, concrete reinforced "boxes" will have a combined weight of more than 1,242 tons.

The Lower Mission Creek Flood Control Project has been a joint effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and the City of Santa Barbara, for many years. The Flood Control Project is located along Mission Creek in the City of Santa Barbara from Canon Perdido Street to Cabrillo Boulevard at the ocean, a distance of about 1.3 miles. The Flood Control Project is expected to be constructed over several years as funding becomes available.

In future phases, the creek channel is being widened to increase its flow capacity to help reduce flooding and property damage similar to what occurred during catastrophic flooding in 1995 and 2005. The project design will enhance flood protection, help protect endangered species and riparian habitats and promote recreational opportunities for the City.

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