



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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DATE: January 14, 2026

02

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT:

ADVERTISE AND AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR COUNTYWIDE CULVERT REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The County of San Diego (County) Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains over 18,000 drainage culverts in the unincorporated region. Drainage culverts convey water away from roadways, enhancing safety for roadway users and protecting the County's transportation and drainage system from deterioration and costly future repairs. DPW regularly assesses the condition of County-maintained culverts during field reviews and has identified locations for repair and replacement. These locations have been prioritized based on the condition of the culvert, community needs, project readiness, and resource availability.

This construction contract is anticipated to repair or replace 62 existing stormwater drainage culverts of varying sizes and lengths at locations throughout the unincorporated County. The list of culverts identified for repair or replacement is in Attachment A, by County district, approximate location, and communities benefiting from the repairs. These improvements will restore the structural integrity and functionality of the drainage systems as well as reduce the risk of flooding and roadway failures on County-maintained roads.

Today's action requests that the County Board of Supervisors approve the advertisement and award of a construction contract for Countywide culvert repair and replacement. As indicated in Attachment A, the bid package has been structured with a minimum number of locations included in the Base Bid, and two additional culverts listed as an Additive Alternate if the bid price is favorable and allows for these additional repairs. Construction costs are estimated to be \$8,650,000, including a 15 percent contingency for unexpected conditions during construction. Total project costs are estimated at \$9,995,000. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2026 and be completed in 2028.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Find in accordance with Section 15301(c) and 15302 (c) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that the proposed project is categorically exempt from CEQA review because it involves the maintenance, replacement, and/or reconstruction of existing culverts involving no or negligible expansion of existing use.
2. Authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to advertise and award a construction contract and to take other actions authorized by Section 401 et seq. of the Administrative Code with respect to contracting for Countywide culvert repair and replacement.
3. Designate the Director, Department of Public Works, as the County Officer responsible for administering the construction contract in accordance with Board Policy F-41, Public Works Construction Contracts.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Department of Public Works strives to preserve, enhance, and promote quality of life and environmental resources through the implementation of projects that improve stormwater conveyance. Maintaining these systems provides equitable benefits for communities by reducing flood risks, maintaining property values, ensuring public safety, and protecting environmental quality. Properly functioning culverts effectively channel floodwater, protecting property and infrastructure throughout the unincorporated area. By ensuring the stormwater conveyance systems function efficiently, communities can mitigate flood risks and enhance public safety.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Maintaining existing stormwater conveyance systems has economic, environmental, public health, and sustainability benefits. Maintaining these stormwater conveyance systems in a timely manner helps prevent more costly future maintenance efforts, thereby reducing environmental impacts and supporting economic sustainability. The culvert repair and replacement proposed in this action will enhance water quality by effectively channeling floodwater to minimize disruption of the environment. The improvements will also help prevent erosion and flooding, which contribute to the County of San Diego's sustainability goal of protecting ecosystems and habitats.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Department of Public Works, Road Fund. If approved, construction costs are estimated to be \$8,650,000, which includes a 15% contingency for unforeseen conditions that may arise during construction. Total project costs are estimated to be \$9,995,000. The funding source is available prior year Road Fund fund balance. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

County construction contracts are competitively and publicly bid and help stimulate the local economy by creating primarily construction-related employment opportunities. All workers

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employed on public works projects must be paid prevailing wages determined by the California Department of Industrial Relations, according to the type of work and location of the project. The prevailing wage rates are typically based on rates specified in collective bargaining agreements. A skilled and trained workforce requirement will be included in the contract in compliance with the County's Working Families Ordinance requirements for County construction projects.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

The County notified the various community planning and sponsor groups: Alpine, Bonsall, County Islands, Crest-Dehesa, Fallbrook, Lake Morena/Campo, Lakeside, North County Metro, North Mountain, Pendleton-De Luz, Pine Valley, Rainbow, Ramona, San Dieguito, Spring Valley, Twin Oaks, Valle De Oro, and Valley Center. Given the nature and necessity of the culvert repair and replacement work, formal responses were not received. This is consistent with past repair projects where staff provide notification that the item will be considered by the Board of Supervisors, but do not request a formal response from community planning and sponsor groups.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for maintaining culverts and drainage facilities within the 3,567 square miles of unincorporated San Diego County. These facilities include a complex network of streets, gutters, catch basins, underground pipes, ditches, pump stations, and channels that carry stormwater runoff away from homes and businesses into rivers and streams. DPW's Storm Water crews and Field Engineering staff inspect all County-maintained culverts and prioritize them for rehabilitation and/or replacement. Prioritization is based on the condition of the culvert, community needs, project readiness, and resource availability. The culvert work restores the structural integrity of the County's drainage infrastructure, protects the associated public road from potential failure, and, as a result, provides a safer roadway for the traveling public.

To provide a long-term, sustainable solution for aging infrastructure, damaged corrugated metal pipe (CMP), which is more susceptible to corrosion, is replaced with new concrete drainage facilities whenever possible. Reinforced concrete pipe (RCP), known for its superior strength, is expected to have a longer lifespan, be more durable, and have lower maintenance requirements compared to CMP. If present conditions make it infeasible to replace existing pipes with RCP, rehabilitation of an existing damaged culvert is considered in lieu of removal and replacement. In these instances, rehabilitation is expected to provide the most cost-effective solution. Rehabilitation of existing damaged culverts consists of invert paving and/or a lining system that can be installed through several different methods. Invert paving involves the placement of a layer of concrete on the invert (bottom) of the pipe to fill existing holes and restore a structurally sound pipe floor. A culvert liner is an internal sleeve that restores the structural integrity of the pipe without requiring roadway excavation and thereby minimizes impacts to the traveling public.

All proposed work for the Base Bid (60 culverts) occurs within existing dedicated road easements or already acquired rights of entry. The contract allows Additive Bid Items, not initially awarded, to be awarded prior to contract completion, if funding is still available. The two additional culverts in the Additive Alternate will not be awarded unless funding and bid prices favor doing so.

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Project locations were identified through routine inspections conducted by DPW staff. A list of culverts where work will be performed along with the communities benefitting from this effort are included in Attachment A. The additive bid item, which consists of two culverts, may be awarded in accordance with the construction contract, if the bid price is favorable and there is available funding for these additional repairs.

Prior to the start of construction, project notifications will be provided in English with a statement in each of the threshold languages referring readers to a webpage with the associated notification where the information will be translated to all threshold languages. Notification methods such as mailers, doorknob hangers, social media postings, and signage will be provided to residents and businesses in the vicinity of the construction activities. The notifications will describe the nature of the project. Traffic control devices such as cones, signage, and flaggers will be used to provide safe pedestrian and vehicular access during construction. A County representative will be on-site throughout the duration of the project and will be available to respond to any project-related inquiries from the public.

Today's action requests the Board to advertise and award a construction contract for Countywide culvert repair and replacement. Construction costs are estimated to be \$8,650,000, including a 15 percent contingency for unexpected conditions during construction. Total project costs are estimated at \$9,995,000. The funding source is available prior year Road Fund fund balance. If approved by the Board, the project will be advertised, and a construction contract will subsequently be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. The project is scheduled to begin construction in spring 2026 and be completed in 2028.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Section 15301(c) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines exempts activities related to operation, repair, maintenance or minor alteration of existing highways and streets from CEQA review. Additionally, Section 15302 (c) of the CEQA Guidelines exempts activities that consist of the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located at the same location. The key consideration for both sections is whether the activity involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use. This project consists of the advertisement and award of a contract to allow for repair, rehabilitation and replacement of culverts in existing County-maintained roadways in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. The project does not include construction of additional traffic lanes, approval of new developments or other activities that may increase traffic to existing roads. The project aims to ensure drainage for existing roads remains adequate. The project, accordingly, results in no or negligible expansion of existing uses and is, therefore, categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Sections 15301 and 15302 of the state CEQA Guidelines.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's recommendations support the Sustainability and Community Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan by utilizing sustainable planning practices that avoid more costly future repairs, actively combatting climate change through maintenance and hazard mitigation, affecting safety for residents and motorists by protecting the County's

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transportation and drainage infrastructure, and enhancing quality of life through increasing the well-being of our residents and the environment.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dahvia Lynch".

DAHVIA LYNCH
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

A – Culvert Repair and Replacement List