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# SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

## I.1 BACKGROUND

In January of 1998, The City of Menlo Park issued a request for proposals for the San Francisquito Creek Bank Revegetation Project. This project called for the preparation of a general Master Plan to revegetate and remove non-native plants in the creek, from University Avenue in Palo Alto to Junipero Serra Bridge in Menlo Park.

*An initial public workshop, sponsored by the cities of Menlo Park and Palo Alto, was held on July 16, 1998 to introduce the project to the public. Videotapes of the workshop are available at the Menlo Park and Palo Alto main libraries.*

Effects of the record flows of February 1998 prompted an increased interest in developing methods for creek bank stabilization to work in conjunction with the project's revegetation recommendations. Other agencies and municipalities joined the effort and the project scope expanded to include the creek south beyond University Avenue to Highway 101. The project has evolved into a collaborative effort between the Cities of Menlo Park, Palo Alto, and East Palo Alto, San Mateo County Flood Control District and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The study reach includes an approximately 6.5 mile length of San Francisquito Creek.

## I.2 PURPOSE

Due to non-uniform maintenance techniques by varied interests over the years, invasive, non-native plant species have displaced much of the native woody species along the creek and have reduced the creek's value to wildlife. In addition, physical alterations of the creek due to a loss of vegetation and inconsistent bank stabilization have contributed to severe bank erosion in some locations. This project is an effort by participating agencies to pool their resources to develop an implementable plan that considers the entire creek as though it were a single organism.

This Existing Conditions Report details the current state of the creek, and is the first step to developing a comprehensive stabilization and revegetation master plan. Data reported here is the product of systematic documentation and analyses of existing conditions via extensive site investigation and detailed mapping.

This project is intended to assist agencies and landowners' consultants in the planning, conceptual design and permitting of San Francisquito Creek stabilization and revegetation projects. The San Francisquito Creek Bank Stabilization and Revegetation Master Plan was created with four primary goals in mind:

- 1) To preserve and/or enhance the natural character of San Francisquito Creek by increasing the presence of native vegetation. This will improve habitat value, water quality, and bank stability – while

protecting or improving creek conditions for state and federally listed species.

2) To stabilize banks in an environmentally sensitive manner that protects property and infrastructure, without significantly changing the conveyance of the creek.

3) To enhance the value of the creek as a community amenity by improving access to public areas, enhancing interpretive and education opportunities, and improving visual connections.

4) To develop a unified approach to implementation of the Plan that promotes consistency across jurisdictional boundaries and streamlines the permitting process for participating landowners.

## 1.3 PROCESS

The Master Plan project was broken into two phases. Phase One included the collection of existing conditions data by the Consultant team via on-site investigations, detailed mapping and other research. Phase Two included the preparation of this document and the Master Plan Report, in which this information was synthesized into specific recommendations.

The project commenced with an educational workshop to assist property owners in making decisions about bank stabilization and vegetation on their property. Periodic meetings have been held between the Client group and Consultants to give direction to the study. A second public workshop was held to present the report and to address public questions and concerns. This document is available to the public at the main libraries of the cities of Menlo Park, Palo Alto, and East Palo Alto and on city web sites.