



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-1045, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator
Staff Name and Phone Number: Barbara Lee 707-565-2510
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Resolution Authorizing Application for Grant Funding for Community-Created Climate Resilient Greenspace Corridors

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the County Administrator, or her designee, to submit an application, in partnership with local non-profit entities as a regional collaborative, for grant funding from the Strategic Growth Council's Regional Climate Collaboratives Grant to support development of Community-Created Climate Resilient Greenspace Corridors in four under-served communities in Sonoma County; and to enter into agreements, approved by County Counsel as to form, as required to apply for the grant and to receive and administer funds if awarded.

Executive Summary:

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is soliciting proposals for Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program grant funding. This new capacity building grant program funds community-rooted and cross-sectoral partners to develop the processes, plans, and projects that will drive and sustain climate action in their communities. The County through the CAO's Climate Action and Resiliency Division (CARD), in partnership with Greenbelt Alliance, La Luz, Sonoma Ecology Center and others, has developed a proposal that would fund community-led design of linked, green space corridors through four under-served communities in Sonoma County. These green corridors will build climate resilience in the communities by mitigating extreme heat, increasing drought resilience, managing run-off during extreme rainfall events, and providing shaded fuel breaks for fire. The green corridors will confer direct health and welfare benefits to community residents, and strengthen social fabric, while also increasing the climate resilience of Sonoma's County's landscape on a system-wide level. Through the process of envisioning, designing, and pursuing funding for their green corridors, community members will build their knowledge and skills to successfully create the community features that will best support and sustain them. By participating in this grant opportunity, CARD and the County as a whole will promote climate resilience and equity. The four communities identified for the projects funded by a successful award include West Santa Rosa, Larkfield-Wikiup, the border area between Rohnert Park and Cotati, and the Springs Area in Sonoma Valley.

Discussion:

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is soliciting proposals for Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program grant funding. The main purpose of this program is to help under-served and under-resourced

communities develop capacity to lead the creation and implementation of projects that will build resilience in their communities to impacts of climate change. The RCC grants center community leadership and require agreements between a minimum of four partners in the regional collaborative that applies for the grant. A key objective of the RCC Program is to build skills among grass-roots community coalitions to successfully compete for grants to fund their priorities. The RCC Program does not require a local match.

The Climate Resilient Community Green Space Corridors (Green Corridors) project is designed to place community members in leadership roles through Community Steering Committees (CSCs) that will gather input from within their communities and use that knowledge as they envision and design corridors of connected green spaces through their communities. The green spaces themselves can be parks, bike paths, flood management channels, shaded fuel breaks, urban farms, green roofs, and other green infrastructure installations. The individual green spaces will be linked to form connected corridors through the built environment of the communities.

These connected green corridors increase community resilience to climate change in a number of important ways. They reduce local temperatures during extreme heat events by mitigating the heat island effect and through the evapotranspiration of the plants themselves. Green corridors can mitigate flood risk during extreme precipitation and reduce fire risk. When they incorporate native plants, the green corridors are inherently drought resilient and help the soil absorb and retain water, effectively banking it for dry periods. They also provide direct benefits to health and welfare, can promote alternative and active modes of transportation, and create welcoming spaces for community events and less formal gathering, which strengthens social fabric.

On September 13, 2022, your Board approved the Sonoma County Climate Resilient Lands Strategy (CRLS, or Strategy), which recommends priority project types to improve the health and resilience of natural and working lands in Sonoma County. One of the priority project types recommended in the Strategy is to develop linked green space corridors that connect critical habitat in the natural and working landscape; the Strategy emphasizes the importance of creating these corridors in under-served and under-resourced communities, to ensure they enjoy the benefits of climate resilient landscapes. The Strategy also articulates how creating these green corridors to link critical habitat through the built environment promotes the health and resilience of Sonoma County's landscape on a system-wide basis.

In the spirit of the CRLS, the Green Corridors project is broadly collaborative in its approach and centers equity by placing community members in decision-making roles, supported by a coalition of public, non-profit, and educational partners. In consultation with Regional Parks, Sonoma Water, and Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, CAO-CARD staff has worked with non-profit partners Greenbelt Alliance, La Luz, Sonoma Ecology Center, and others to develop the general framework of the project and the capacity-building strategy. Greenbelt Alliance will be the managing partner and will organize and coordinate the efforts of other partners to form and support CSCs in four underserved communities in Sonoma County. The four communities identified for the project include West Santa Rosa, Larkfield-Wikiup, the border area between Rohnert Park

and Cotati, and the Springs Area in Sonoma Valley.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Climate Action and Resiliency

Goal: Goal 5: Maximize opportunities for mitigation of climate change and adaptation through land conservation work and land use policies

Objective: Objective 2: Develop policies to maximize carbon sequestration and minimize loss of natural carbon sinks including old growth forests, the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and rangelands. Encourage agricultural and open space land management to maximize sequestration

Prior Board Actions:

On September 13, 2022, your Board approved the Sonoma County Climate Resilient Lands Strategy.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

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Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A