Legislation Text

File #: 2026-0690, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Grant Davis 707-547-1900, Dan Mason 707-547-1967, Sharina Arevalos 707-547-1912
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisorial District(s): Third and Fifth

Title:
Approve Grant of Easements on Sonoma County Water Agency property to the City of Santa Rosa, and to Heather Ann Coe, a private individual, for access and utility rights

Recommended Action:
A) Determine that the proposed easement agreements granting permanent property rights to (1) the City of Santa Rosa, and (2) Heather Ann Coe, a private individual, will not adversely affect Sonoma County Water Agency; and
B) Determine that the approval of the easement agreements for (1) the City of Santa Rosa for the Pierson Street Rehabilitation Project and (2) Heather Ann Coe, for private access rights, a gravel driveway, and utility rights will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment; and
C) Authorize and delegate authority to the General Manager of Sonoma County Water Agency to execute easement agreements between Sonoma County Water Agency with (1) the City of Santa Rosa, and (2) Heather Ann Coe, along with any other related documents necessary to complete the transaction, in a form approved by County Counsel. (Third and Fifth District) (4/5th Vote Requirement)

Executive Summary:
The City of Santa Rosa (City) has requested an easement on a portion of Santa Rosa Creek lands owned by Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) for flood control for the Pierson Street Rehabilitation project located at APN 125-051-068.

Heather Ann Coe has requested an easement from Sonoma Water for ingress and egress, and installation of a gravel driveway and a water service line on Sonoma Water aqueduct properties located at APN 083-040-063, 083-040-071, and 083-040-087.

This item requests that the Board of Directors (Board) approve the proposed grant of easements on portions of Sonoma Water property at the property locations identified above, and delegate authority to the General Manager of Sonoma Water to execute the easement agreements, and any other related documents necessary to complete the transfers, in a form approved by County Counsel.

Discussion:
<u>Easements to City of Santa Rosa:</u>
Sonoma Water owns and maintains Santa Rosa Creek which provides flood protection within the City. The City

has requested that Sonoma Water grant a perpetual easement to a portion of Sonoma Water's Santa Rosa Creek.

The City's Pierson Street Rehabilitation project includes the reconstruction of Pierson Street from West Third Street to Santa Rosa Creek. Within the paving limits, the existing 6-inch water main will be replaced with a new 8-inch water main, and associated valves, meter boxes, and services will be upgraded. Two fire hydrants will also be installed. Within the same limits, the existing 6-inch sewer main will be replaced, including associated laterals, manholes, and cleanouts. The project also includes storm drainage inlets along Pierson Street and construction of a storm drain outfall on Sonoma Water property to alleviate localized standing water by conveying stormwater runoff to Santa Rosa Creek on APN 125-051-068.

Easements to Private Property Owner:
Heather Ann Coe (Owner) has requested an easement from Sonoma Water for ingress and egress, and installation of a gravel driveway and a water service line on Sonoma Water aqueduct properties located at APN 083-040-063, 083-040-071, and 083-040-087. Owner plans to install a modular home on the vacant parcel. The easement agreement will also allow installation of future utilities, as needed and with prior written approval by Sonoma Water. Owner does not currently hold any easements across Sonoma Water parcels located on APN 083-040-063, 083-040-071, and 083-040-087 for these activities and granting of the easement will allow Owner access to her landlocked property located at 5940 Anderson Rd., Forestville (APN 083-040-061).

Review:
Sonoma Water staff has reviewed the proposed plans for the projects outlined above and determined that granting easements for the individual projects will not adversely affect Sonoma Water's current use of the properties. City and Owner understand and agree that any improvements constructed as part of their respective projects will be considered their sole property, and they shall be solely responsible for the maintenance of those improvements within the easement areas at their own cost and expense.

General Plan:
In accordance with Section 65402 of California Government Code, Sonoma Water requested that the City of Santa Rosa Planning Division determine whether the granting of an easement to City would conform with their General Plan for the project locations. As the City of Santa Rosa Planning Division did not respond within 40 days to the request, per Section 65402 of the California Government Code, the granting of these easements by this Board is deemed to be in conformance with their General Plan.

In accordance with Section 65402 of California Government Code, Sonoma Water requested that the County of Sonoma Planning Division determine whether the granting of an easement to private property owner would conform with their General Plan for the project locations. As the County of Sonoma Planning Division did not respond within 40 days to the request, per Section 65402 of the California Government Code, the granting of the easement by this Board is deemed to be in conformance with the County's General Plan.

Consideration:
City of Santa Rosa
Section 9 of Sonoma Water's enabling legislation provides that an easement conveyed to the City may be released or conveyed to another public entity with or without consideration. Sonoma Water and the City have

mutually agreed to grant easements between parties for similar projects without consideration to assist in processing the conveyance of property rights needed for one another's projects.

Private Property Owner Heather Ann Coe
Section 9 of Sonoma Water's enabling legislation requires that any easement granted to a private entity must be granted for adequate consideration. Sonoma Water has determined that the value of the easement is $8,177. Owner has made a $5,000 deposit to offset staff time costs related to processing the easement agreement and related Board agenda items and agrees to compensate Sonoma Water for the value of the easement. The total compensation of $13,177 to be received from the property owner is less than full cost recovery for the grant of easement from Sonoma Water.

California Environmental Quality Act
Easements to City of Santa Rosa:
The City has determined that the Pierson Street Rehabilitation Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15282(k), Other Statutory Exemptions, 15301(c) Existing Facilities, and 15302(c) Replacement or Reconstruction, because the Project consists of repairs and maintenance of existing streets, sidewalks, and gutters and publicly-owned utilities used to provide sewerage or other public utility service. The project also consists of replacing and reconstructing existing utility systems involving negligible or no expansion of capacity beyond that required to meet current City design standards. Additionally, the project qualifies for Statutory Exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15282(k) in that the project consists of the installation, repair, removal, or demolition of existing pipelines as set forth in Section 21080.21 of the Public Resources Code, for a length that does not exceed one mile in length. None of the exceptions to categorical exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to this project. A Notice of Exemption was filed by the City on March 2, 2026.

The General Manager has determined that the Grant of Easement to the City for the operation and maintenance of the improvements is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15304(f), Minor Alterations to Land, because granting of the easement for the construction and maintenance of the storm drain outfall, by the City would not result in the removal of healthy, mature scenic trees, and will not adversely affect Sonoma Water in any respect. Sonoma Water staff prepared a Notice of Exemption in accordance with CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines, and Sonoma Water's Compliance Procedures for CEQA.

Easement to Private Property Owner Heather Ann Coe:
Sonoma Water has determined that the easement will not adversely affect Sonoma Water's use of its property. Sonoma Water's enabling legislation requires that granting this easement be considered at no less than two regularly scheduled board meetings. In accordance with Section 9 of Sonoma Water's enabling legislation, this item was considered at a previous Board Meeting.

The General Manager has determined that executing the easement agreement is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15304(f): Minor Alterations to Land. Granting the easement, which would allow the Owner ingress and egress access and associated improvements, would not result in the removal of any healthy, mature, scenic trees, will not conflict with Sonoma Water's current uses of the property, and will not adversely affect Sonoma Water. Sonoma Water staff prepared a Notice of Exemption in accordance with the CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines, and Sonoma Water's Compliance Procedures for CEQA.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan:
N/A
Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:
N/A
Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?
No

Prior Board Actions:
07/07/2026: Consider Grant of Easements on Sonoma County Water Agency property to the City of Santa Rosa for multiple projects, and to Heather Coe, a private individual, for access and utility rights.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	**FY26-27 Adopted**	**FY27-28 Projected**	**FY28-29 Projected**
Budgeted Expenses	$33,209		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	**$33,209**		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	$33,209		
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	**$33,209**		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:
Easement to Private Property Owner:
Budgeted amount of $8,215 is available from FY 2026/2027 appropriations from the Sonoma Water General Fund. $4,215 was expended in FY2025/2026. The property owner deposited payment of $5,000 to offset the cost of staff time (estimated at $11,000) and related administrative costs for the Board agenda items incurred in FY 2026/2027 (proportionally estimated at $1,500). Owner will additionally pay Sonoma Water $8,177 for the value of the easement. No additional appropriation is required.

Easements to City of Santa Rosa:
Budgeted amount of $24,994. is available from FY 2026/2027 appropriations from the Flood Control Zone 1A Fund. $11,006 was expended in FY2025/2026. Sonoma Water and City of Santa Rosa have mutually agreed to grant easements between parties for similar projects without acquisition costs to assist in processing the conveyance of property rights needed for one another's projects. Cost to Sonoma Water in staff time is estimated at $30,000 and related administrative costs for the Board agenda items incurred in FY 2026/2027 are proportionally estimated at $6,000. No additional appropriation is required.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	**Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)**	**Additions (Number)**	**Deletions (Number)**

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):
N/A

Attachments:
Project Map - Pierson Street
Project Map - Coe Easement

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:
Sample - City of Santa Rosa Easement Agreement
Draft - Coe Easement Agreement