



Consideration of Award of Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant for Southport Levee Recreational Trail Planning and Design Staff Recommendation

This agenda item presents for Board consideration a recommendation to award Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program funding for the Southport Levee Recreational Trail Planning and Design project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Applicant	City of West Sacramento
Project Number	P6803
Project Type	Planning
County	Yolo
Funding Request	\$341,668
Total Project Cost	\$391,668
Funding Recommendation	\$341,668

RECOMMENDATION

Conservancy staff recommends that the Board approve up to \$341,668 in grant funding for the Southport Levee Recreational Trail Planning and Design project (P6803) proposed by the City of West Sacramento. Conservancy staff prepared the text below based on staff’s best understanding of the information provided in the application and meetings with staff of the City of West Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department. Staff followed the Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program Grant Guidelines, approved by the Conservancy Board December 2019, in working with the applicant and assessing this proposal.

DESCRIPTION

The proposed project, Southport Levee Recreation Trail (SLRT) Planning and Design, will create 90 Percent Design Plans, and complete all environmental and permitting required for the construction of 5.6 miles of a paved, ADA-compliant bicycle and pedestrian trail on the crown of the Southport Setback Levee, which was recently constructed as part of flood mitigation in the Sacramento Valley. The levee path will start in urban downtown West Sacramento and head south through developed residential neighborhoods, agricultural areas, and wildlife habitat. In addition to planning for the trail and educational signage, the SLRT Planning and Design project will consider and plan for amenities such as trailheads, shade, and seating to encourage public access and increase recreational opportunities. Completion of the planning and design phase will enable shovel-ready plans that can be used to apply for grant funding for construction. The City’s Parks and Recreation Department will maintain the trail after it is constructed.

The SLRT Planning and Design effort is part of a multiphase project that commenced with the construction of the Southport Setback Levee. Prior to completion of levee construction in November 2018, the City of West Sacramento (City) began studying the feasibility of paving the crown of the levee and locating potential trailhead sites near the levee to formalize recreation and access opportunities. The study was funded by the Department of Water Resources and resulted in the adoption of the Southport Setback Levee Recreation Trail Report (Trail Report) in September 2017. The Trail Report confirmed that constructing a paved bicycle and pedestrian trail along the crown of the levee and adding access ramps would not compromise the integrity of the levee. The Trail Report also identified connections to existing and planned trails in the City, as well as supporting amenities including trailheads, signage, shade, and seating to provide and encourage public access.

Pavement of the levee crown was anticipated as part of the 2019 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan; the 2018 Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Master Plan; the Southport Sacramento River Early Implementation Project; and the City's General Plan 2035.

The proposed SLRT Planning and Design effort includes completion of 90 percent design plans, and completion of all permitting and environmental clearance to position the project for construction funding. Trail construction costs on unimproved land in the City have ranged from \$1 million to \$1.6 million per mile of trail. However, due to the extensive site work already completed as part of the levee improvements, the proposed SLRT is estimated to cost approximately \$312,000 per mile. The SLRT will be adjacent and connected to several other projects and recreational opportunities including the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail; Bees Lake (planning for which was funded by the Conservancy's Proposition 1 program); and the Levee Offset Area, which is a comprehensive 120-acre habitat restoration effort (funded in part by the Department of Water Resources (DWR)). The Levee Offset Area will be visible to users of the SLRT, thereby providing opportunities to observe restoration construction in action and the benefits of that restoration when complete.

Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC)

Proposition 68 requires (PRC 45 Sec. 80008(a)(1)) that at least 20 percent of all funding be spent on projects that serve severely disadvantaged communities, which are defined as "a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average." The SLRT Planning and Design project does not serve a disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged community.

Cost Share

The City will contribute \$50,000 in staff time.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

The project is consistent with Proposition 68, and the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code sections 32300-32381) and strategic plan. This project is consistent with priorities outlined in the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan, the Delta Protection Commission's Economic Sustainability Plan, and the local planning efforts as indicated above. Additionally, the project furthers the California Natural Resources Agency priority of expanding access to parks, natural places, and outdoor recreation for all Californians.

LOCAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Local support is evident through the results of extensive community engagement over the past few years. The Southport Sacramento River Corridor Recreation Program and the City's 2018 Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan both identified a strong interest by the community and stakeholders to develop multi-benefit projects that integrate trails, recreation, and access to nature as part of future levee improvement projects. In 2019, the City adopted its updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, which included extensive community outreach, completion of a statistically valid survey, and online and intercept surveys. The top priorities identified by City residents included development of new trails, access to open space areas and nature, and improving connections the Sacramento riverfront. Additional stakeholder engagement took place as part of completing the feasibility study, funded by DWR, for the proposed project.

The West Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency was engaged with the feasibility study and will continue to be engaged with this planning effort. The Central Valley Flood Protection Board has expressed support for construction of a levee trail as long as the flood control purpose of the floodway facilities remains primary. The Board and the local flood agency retain the right to temporarily close the trail for improvements, maintenance, or during emergency flood-fighting activities.

Community engagement will continue in this planning project. The proposal includes 3 community meetings to gather input and feedback on design plans as they are developed. Stakeholders engaged during the feasibility study as well as other residents, reclamation districts, and relevant agencies will be invited to participate.

BACKGROUND

Proposition 68 is the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Public Resources Code Division 45) that made \$12,000,000 available to the Conservancy for uses specified in its governing statute (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act, Public Resources Codes, Division 22.3). The Conservancy will use Proposition 68 funds to support projects in the Conservancy's Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program). Unlike traditional grant programs, this program was designed to allow Conservancy staff to collaborate with project applicants to develop proposals that meet the Conservancy and Proposition 68 goals. When applicants submit concept proposals, staff review the proposal to assess viability and appropriateness with program goals. If the concept proposal is suitable, staff then guide applicants as they develop a full proposal for consideration of Proposition 68 funding. The Southport Levee Recreational Trail Planning and Design project is the second full project proposal staff has presented for the Conservancy Board to consider award of grant funds.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE

Move to award funding up to \$341,668 to the City of West Sacramento from the Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program for the Southport Levee Recreational Trail Planning and Design project.

Meeting Date: July 28, 2021

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Figure 1. Southport Levee Recreational Trail Planning and Design Project Area Map

