



Consideration of Award of Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant for Asian American Heritage Park Staff Recommendation

This agenda item presents for Board consideration a recommendation to award Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program funding for the Asian American Heritage Park project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Applicant	Delta Educational Cultural Society
Project ID	P6811
Project Type	Implementation
County	Yolo
Funding Request	\$554,773
Total Project Cost	\$554,773
Funding Recommendation	\$554,773

RECOMMENDATION

Conservancy staff recommends that the Board approve up to \$554,773 in grant funding for the Asian American Heritage Park project (P6811) proposed by the Delta Educational Cultural Society. Conservancy staff prepared the text below based on staff’s best understanding of the information provided in the application and meetings with members of the Delta Educational Cultural Society. 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 Asian American Heritage Park is an implementation project that will create a .07-acre park in the city of Isleton at 27 Main Street. The currently vacant parcel fronts Main Street and backs up to the levee at Highway 160, which runs along the Sacramento River. The proposed park will include culturally relevant objects and interpretive exhibits on the history and heritage of the Chinese and Japanese who once occupied the Asian American Historic District of Isleton, and the events that impacted these communities. The Delta Educational Cultural Society will use Conservancy funding to develop the interpretive content and park elements, which will include landscaping, walkways, benches, engraved bricks and plaques recognizing contributors to the park, an artistic ceramic water feature, seat walls, walkway tiles, and a Japanese bell temple (Kansho-do). A survey kiosk will be installed to help measure the educational benefits of the park. When complete, a grand opening ceremony will inform community members about this new cultural resource.

The lot on which the park will be developed is owned by the Delta Educational Cultural Society and is centrally positioned in the Isleton Chinese and Japanese Commercial Districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1991. Adjacent and complementary to the restored Bing Kong Tong Building, the Asian American Heritage Park will contribute to the historic preservation and restoration of Main Street in this Legacy Community and will help to promote tourism and economic growth for Isleton and the Delta region by adding a new cultural resource and historic attraction to the area.

The interpretive exhibits in the park will tell the story of the Chinese and Japanese immigrant communities in Isleton and the Delta region and major historical events that impacted these communities. The content of the exhibits will be developed through a partnership with Sacramento State University's Public History program, local advisors from Chinese and Japanese communities, and academic experts. The Kansho-do will be a reminder and tribute to Isleton's Japanese Buddhist community, which was active prior to World War II and during the Japanese internment. A survey kiosk will help to measure the educational benefits of the park.

The public entry on Main Street will be fenced with a gate that can be locked to prevent unlawful entry at night. The design of the fencing and entryway will reflect the lot's former incarnation as a playground for Chinese children.

As the Lead Agency, the City of Isleton prepared a Notice of Exemption for the Asian American Heritage Park project. The City of Isleton City Council voted on February 9, 2021 that the project is categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 19 Sections 15303 and 15304 (<https://cityofisleton.com/city-council-agendas-minutes/>). The City of Isleton filed the Notice of Exemption with the Sacramento County Clerk in February 2021 (see Attachment) and paid the processing fee on October 10, 2021.

Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC)

Proposition 68 requires 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" (PRC 45 Sec. 80008(a)(1)). Located in the city of Isleton, the Asian American Heritage Park project serves a severely disadvantaged community.

Cost Share

The Delta Educational Cultural Society, a nonprofit organization, will not contribute cost share. While the Delta Educational Cultural Society does not have qualifying cost share during the funding term, it is notable that they have secured considerable commitments of time, labor, donations and monetary support for other components of the project as described in the local and institutional support section.

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 and the Delta Protection Commission's Economic Sustainability Plan.

LOCAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Local support is evident through the submission of letters of support from local community organizations as well as local chapters of national culturally relevant organizations. The Delta Educational Cultural Society is a volunteer board with support from community members. Local support for this project that has been provided prior to the grant funding term includes donation of property to Delta Educational Cultural Society; pro bono help with park design, cost estimates, and proposal development; donation of Kansho-do design and construction plans; and donation of the Kansho-do bell; all of which have helped make this a financially viable project.

Additionally, the Asian American Heritage Park has secured a \$2,500 donation from the Isleton Events and Tourists Association and has donations pledged from a number of organizations and families totaling more than \$20,000 as part of a commemorative park benches and bricks program.

Institutional support from the City of Isleton includes providing assistance in procuring a construction contractor and a commitment to providing park maintenance for the full grant term through the city's Department of Public Works.

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 Asian American Heritage Park is the first implementation project serving a Severely Disadvantaged Community that staff has presented for the Conservancy Board to consider award of grant funds.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE

Move to award funding up to \$554,773 to the Delta Educational Cultural Society from the Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program for the Asian American Heritage Park project.

CONTACT

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FIGURE 1. MAP OF ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PARK PROJECT AREA

