



Consideration of California Environmental Quality Act Lead Agency Exemption Declaration and Award of Community Enhancement Grant Program Funds for Land Acquisition for Darrahville Property in Stockton in Support of the Delta Aquatic Center

Staff Report

This agenda item presents for Board consideration a recommendation to adopt a Board resolution in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which recognizes the proposed project is statutorily exempt from environmental review and recommends the award of Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program funding for the Land Acquisition for Darrahville Property in Stockton.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Applicant	San Joaquin Community Foundation
Project ID	P6825
Project Type	Acquisition
County	San Joaquin
Funding Request	\$2,170,499
Total Project Cost	\$2,333,500
Funding Recommendation	\$2,170,499

RECOMMENDATION

Conservancy staff recommend that the Board adopt Resolution 2025-01 recognizing that this Project is statutorily exempt from environmental review under CEQA, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.28.

Contingent upon the Board's adoption of Resolution 2025-01, Conservancy staff recommend that the Board approve up to \$2,170,499 in grant funding for the Land Acquisition for Darrahville Property in Stockton project (P6825) proposed by the San Joaquin Community Foundation.

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 San Joaquin Community Foundation. Staff followed the Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program Grant Guidelines, approved by the Conservancy Board in December 2019, in working with the Applicant and assessing this proposal.

DESCRIPTION

The Applicant seeks funding to acquire and preserve 22 acres of privately owned land in Stockton, California, which will be developed into a public park for the benefit of the local community. Stockton is a Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC), ranking among the most disadvantaged areas in California, facing severe environmental and health challenges.

Following the acquisition and preservation of this land, the project will serve Stockton's SDACs through key partnerships with community-based organizations, and by creating publicly accessible new parkland with trails, tree canopy, and an aquatic center for public water access, along with a Delta Science Lab for environmental education, and regenerative farming managed by the Black Urban Farmers Association's Healing Harvest project. Once built, this initiative will enhance public access to the Delta, promote health and wellness, support environmental education, and drive economic growth in the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

This acquisition is considered a project under CEQA. Conservancy staff have prepared a CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) and Lead Agency declaration for consideration by the Delta Conservancy Board. The exemption, which is outlined in Assembly Bill 782, enacted as Chapter 181 of the Statutes of 2019 (Public Resources Code Section 21080.28), codifies a CEQA exemption for land acquisitions or sales to preserve open space for park purposes, habitat, or historical resources, making it a statutory exemption with no exceptions. This Project qualifies for this exemption because it will fund the acquisition of land that will be used to create a public park space and access to the waterfront. Staff have reviewed the proposed Project and advise the Board to adopt Board Resolution 2025-01 recognizing the Project is exempt and have the Chair sign the attached Notice of Exemption (see Agenda Item 8.2). No additional permits are required for the acquisition phase of the Project. Additional environmental review and permitting will be conducted in the future for the development of the park site.

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 San Joaquin County, the Project serves a severely disadvantaged community.

COST SHARE

The San Joaquin Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization, will contribute cost share of \$63,001 and the Trust for Public Land, who has helped with the development of the proposal - and will help facilitate the acquisition - will also contribute \$100,000 in cost-share.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

The Project is consistent with multiple actions and priorities outlined in the Conservancy's governing statute, the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, and the Delta Plan. The Project will acquire land, which will be developed to provide public access to the Delta, increase recreation and tourism opportunities, foster health and wellness, preserve the unique cultural environment of the Delta region, promote environmental education, and increase the economic vitality of the region.

LOCAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The proposal demonstrates local support and includes over 40 letters of support from institutions and community members, including letters from the San Joaquin Office of Education, City of Stockton, Delta Sculling Center, Restore the Delta, and the Black Urban Farmers Association.

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 million 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. 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 proposals to assess viability and appropriateness with program goals. If the concept proposal is suitable, staff then guide applicants as they develop full proposals for consideration of Proposition 68 funding. The Land Acquisition for Darrahville Property in Stockton is the eighteenth full proposal staff has presented to the Conservancy Board for consideration of the award of grant funds. The Conservancy also provided \$2,544,725 in Climate Resilience, Community Access, and Natural Resource Protection (CAR) funds for the planning phase (Project ID CAR05).

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE

Two separate motions are required.

Move that the Board adopt Resolution 2025-01, which recognizes the Land Acquisition for Darrahville Property in Stockton is statutorily exempt from environmental review as outlined in Assembly Bill 782, enacted as Chapter 181 of the Statutes of 2019 (Public Resources Code Section 21080.28).

Move that the Board award funding up to \$2,170,499 to the San Joaquin Community Foundation from the Proposition 68 Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program for the Land Acquisition for Darrahville Property in Stockton.

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Figure 8.1. Map of Darrahville Property being considered for acquisition funding.

