



**DATE:** November 5, 2019

**CATEGORY:** Consent

**DEPT.:** Community Services

**TITLE:** **Santa Clara Valley Water District  
2019 Safe, Clean Water and Natural  
Flood Protection Priority B7 Grant  
Program Funding**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager or Designee to Apply for and, if Awarded Grant Funding, Execute a Funding Agreement with Santa Clara Valley Water District through the 2019 Safe, Clean Water Priority B7 Grant Program to Restore Wildlife Habitat Along the Mountain View Tidal Marsh within Shoreline at Mountain View, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).
2. Increase appropriations up to \$150,000 in the Community Services Department contingent upon award of the grant and execution of a funding agreement. (Five votes required)

### **BACKGROUND**

Santa Clara Valley Water District (“Valley Water”) released the 2019 Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Grant Program that includes funding for projects to restore wildlife habitat. Staff became aware of this grant opportunity and met with interested organizations to determine if these funds would be appropriate to improve areas of Shoreline at Mountain View. Staff met with representatives from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and Grassroots Ecology to prepare initial projects that would support the grant outcomes. The Audubon Society was selected because of the large number of volunteers they can engage to help accomplish project objectives. Grassroots Ecology was selected due to their expertise in propagating native plants for restoration projects.

Together, the agencies agreed upon a collaborative project that will enhance and restore approximately one-half acre of habitat along the eastern end of the Mountain View Tidal Marsh. The project will span five years and involve the removal of nonnative invasive plants along the Tidal Marsh and the revegetation of 2,500 local watershed

plants providing habitat enhancement for multiple species. There will be special emphasis to enhance habitat for two endangered, endemic species: the ridgway's rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse (providing cover as both species experience refuge limitations during tidal inundations). The restoration project will also benefit three species of special concern: burrowing owls (foraging habitat), the San Francisco common yellowthroat (nesting and foraging habitat), and northern harriers (nesting and foraging habitat). This project will provide unique informative and volunteer opportunities for the local community, businesses, and educational establishments.

## **ANALYSIS**

If the grant is approved by Valley Water, the City of Mountain View will be the lead agency for this project, working collaboratively with Grassroots Ecology and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. The City, Grassroots Ecology, and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will enter into agreements setting forth each party's responsibilities for the project.

The first step of this project would include the City biologists working with volunteers to remove existing nonnative plants in the project area. Grassroots Ecology will collect seeds in the local watershed and germinate the plants in their certified nursery. Once the plants are the appropriate size for planting along the Tidal Marsh, volunteers will be scheduled from local colleges, businesses, and community groups to assist with planting in appropriate locations, with guidance from City and Grassroots Ecology staff. There will be a total of three planting areas along the Tidal Marsh. As each segment is complete, appropriate irrigation will be installed.

In addition to planting along the Mountain View Tidal Marsh, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society will educate volunteers to build and install 20 bird nesting boxes and four bat boxes as part of their Cavity Nesting Recovery Program. Volunteers will be used to monitor the boxes on a regular basis, and this information will be collected for the final monitoring report to Valley Water.

The City has applied for this grant before, which was awarded funding in 2016. That grant funded a three-year project that began in 2017 and has since improved wildlife habitat along Permanente Creek. A total of 32 bird nesting boxes were installed, with more than 1,000 native plants encompassing 30 different species. The City Wildlife Preservation Coordinator has conducted ongoing monitoring since this project has started, and the biodiversity in this area has improved significantly. A total of 147 species have been observed within the restored area, including 7 mammals, 2 amphibians, 2 reptiles, 46 birds, and 90 invertebrates. These species have been

observed in greater abundance at the restored site as compared to adjacent areas with primarily nonnative plants. A total of 307 volunteers spent 946 hours on this project over the course of three years.

As with the prior project, City staff will be responsible for keeping the Mountain View Tidal Marsh project on schedule and for submitting the necessary grant documentation, including reimbursement forms and project monitoring reports.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the application for grant funds does not constitute a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4). The Mountain View Tidal Marsh project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15333—Small Habitat Restoration Projects.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Should the City Council approve the resolution and Valley Water awards full grant funding, the City may receive a total of up to \$150,000. The City will receive these funds on a reimbursement basis following execution of a funding agreement with Valley Water, so an additional appropriation is needed in advance of the expenditures.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Do not approve the grant application submission.
2. Provide further direction to staff.

**PUBLIC NOTICING** – Agenda posting.

Prepared by:

Brady Ruebusch  
Senior Administrative Analyst

Approved by:

John R. Marchant  
Community Services Director

Audrey Seymour Ramberg  
Assistant City Manager/  
Chief Operating Officer

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Attachment: 1. Resolution