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Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District Board Approves \$3.4 Million for Urban Open Space Projects throughout County

Pledged funds to go toward open space, restoration & recreation within or near cities

SANTA ROSA, CA (October 25, 2016) – The Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (District) today accepted District Staff funding recommendations for seven projects in and near urban centers in Sonoma County. Through its Matching Grant Program, which solicits applications every two years, the District funds acquisition, restoration and recreational development projects that offer benefits to urban communities.

In one of its most competitive cycle to date, the District recommended \$3,408,124 in funding for seven diverse and innovative projects throughout the county to provide open space, restoration, and recreation opportunities within cities or on the urban edge. Funding for the 2016 Program was initially allocated at \$2.5 million; however, given the unusually competitive nature of this year’s cycle and the unique opportunities to protect new lands within the urban landscape, additional funding was recommended. A savings of over \$400,000 from a Matching Grant project funded in the 2014 program cycle that was completed under budget, as well as higher-than-budgeted sales tax revenue in fiscal year 2015/2016, made this one-time increase in funding possible.

“The goal of the District’s Matching Grant program is to create vibrant and inviting spaces within cities, or right on the urban edge, where communities can gather, get some exercise, and enjoy the outdoors,” said District General Manager, Bill Keene. “We are particularly thrilled with this year’s cycle because we received a number of excellent proposals for projects that will result in the protection of new lands, the creation of new parks, and opportunities to work in new communities.”

The 2016 cycle’s grantees includes such projects as Andy’s Unity Park, Graton Green Community Park, and Southeast Santa Rosa Greenway that seek to create new parks and open spaces for the community to enjoy. At Andy’s Unity Park, the funding would allow for the development of picnic areas, a community garden, natural playing fields, and other passive and intensive recreational opportunities in an area where relatively few park lands and recreational amenities exist for residents. The Graton Green Community Park project proposes the creation of the first-ever public park in Graton, to be located beside the District-protected and well-traveled West County Trail. The Southeast Santa Rosa Greenway project involves the proposed acquisition of up to 57 acres of land for park and open space connecting Farmers Lane in Santa Rosa to Spring Lake Regional Park. Other projects include the acquisition of park land in Roseland and along the Russian River, and recreation development at existing parks in Sonoma and Petaluma.

Below is a list of the 2016 recommendations:

Project	Applicant/ Co-Applicant	Type of Project	Size (acres)	Funding Request	Final Staff Recommendations
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Andy's Unity Park	Sonoma County Regional Parks	Recreation Development	4.22	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Graton Green Community Park	Graton Green Group	Acquisition / Recreation Development	0.5	\$103,124	\$103,124
Maxwell Farms Renovation and Restoration	Sonoma County Regional Parks	Recreation Development / Restoration	85	\$1,000,000	\$250,000 (partial)
River Lane Acquisition	Russian River Recreation and Parks District	Acquisition	0.67	\$35,000	\$35,000
Roseland Community Park Land Acquisition	City of Santa Rosa	Acquisition	2.61	\$1,105,000	\$920,000 (partial)
Southeast Santa Rosa Greenway	City of Santa Rosa/ Sonoma Land Trust	Acquisition	up to 57	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Steamer Landing Park River Access and Enhancement	City of Petaluma/ Friends of the Petaluma River	Recreation Development	10.1	\$150,000	\$100,000 (partial)
			TOTAL	\$4,393,124	\$3,408,124

The Board's acceptance of projects into the Matching Grant Program does not in itself guarantee funding, but rather represents a commitment by the District to work with the project applicants to meet all Program requirements for the proposed grant. Project implementation will then occur in accordance with the Program Guidelines. Funding disbursement for Matching Grant projects is contingent upon future approvals by both the District's Fiscal Oversight Commission and Board of Directors, and other terms including the execution of a Matching Grant Agreement, and permanent protections of the land via a Conservation Easement, and, in some cases, a Recreation Covenant. These documents ensure that the benefits offered by these projects to local communities and habitats will be permanent.

"The District's Matching Grant Program highlights a wonderful community process that results in projects in or near cities that serve the needs of the area population, while creating and protecting natural areas that beautify, bring people together and offer opportunities for healthy exercise," offers Efen Carrillo, District Board Chair and Fifth District County Supervisor. "This truly inclusive process brings local residents and families together to support and enjoy their precious natural spaces – both rural and urban."

About the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District permanently protects the diverse agricultural, natural resource and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations. Since its creation, the District has protected more than 107,000 acres of land throughout our region. These agricultural and open space lands have been protected through a quarter-cent sales tax approved by voters in 1990 and reauthorized in 2006. For more information, please visit www.sonomaopenspace.org.

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