



**AG + OPEN SPACE**  
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**747 Mendocino Avenue – Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401**  
**October 24, 2019 | 5:00 pm**

MEMBERS PLEASE CALL IF UNABLE TO ATTEND

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1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comment**  
Comments on items not listed on the agenda. Time is limited to 3 minutes per person/item.
3. **Approval of Minutes from September 26, 2019 Attachment A | ACTION ITEM**
4. **General Manager's Report**
5. **Subcommittee Report Out**  
Matching Grant Program
6. **Field Trip Debrief**  
**Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager**
7. **MGP Guidelines Attachment B | ACTION ITEM**  
**Jennifer Kuzmar, Matching Grant Coordinator**  
**Misti Arias, Acquisition Manager**
8. **Vital Lands | ACTION ITEM**  
**Bill Keene, General Manager**  
**Allison Schichtel, Conservation Planning Senior Planner**
9. **Projects in Negotiation Attachment C**
10. **Announcements from Advisory Committee Members**
11. **Adjournment**  
Next Meeting: December 12, 2019

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## FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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### November 28, 2019

Cancelled for Thanksgiving

### December 12, 2019

MGP 2020 Kickoff

Vital Lands Implementation Plans/Interactive Map

Rules of Procedure

Community Relations Strategy

### January 23, 2020

Stewardship Update to Board

Legislation on Stewardship Reserve

Staff Spotlights

### February 27, 2020

Update on Process Mapping and Refinement of Functions

Staff Spotlights

### March 26, 2010

Update on Our Work with Agriculture

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**DISABLED ACCOMMODATION:** If you have a disability which requires the agenda materials to be in an alternative format or requires an interpreter or other person to assist you while attending this meeting, please contact Mariah Robson at (707) 565-7363, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to ensure arrangements for accommodation.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Any member of the audience desiring to address the Committee on a matter on the agenda will have an opportunity to speak. In order that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak, please be brief and limit your comments to the subject under discussion. Each person is usually granted 3 minutes to speak; time limitations are at the discretion of the Chair.

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**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**747 Mendocino Avenue – Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401**  
**September 26, 2019 | 4:00 pm**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bill Smith	Neysa Hinton	John Nagle
Alex Wood	Leah Gold	Steve Rabinowitsh
John Dell’Osso	Taj Hittenberger	Tawny Tesconi

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Evan Wiig	Jan McFarland	Paul Martin	Doug Lipton
Steve Barbose	Don McEnhill	Cary Fargo	Curt Nichols
Jennielynn Holmes	Austin Maners		

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Bill Keene, General Manager; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Stephanie Tavares-Buhler, Senior Acquisition Specialist; Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist; Fraser Ross, Stewardship Specialist; Catherine Iantosca, Stewardship Technician; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Call to Order**

Chair Dell’Osso called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm.

**Public Comment**

Duane DeWitt from Roseland spoke about conserving nature in disadvantaged areas and conserving nature in general. His concern is that the City of Santa Rosa is more directed toward development of parks and not conserving nature. He requested the Ag + Open Space not allow changes to conservation easements on the City of Santa Rosa properties.

**Approval of Minutes**

Bill Smith motioned to approve the minutes from July 25, 2019 as is, and Leah Gold seconded the motion. All in favor, with abstentions from John Nagle, Neysa Hinton and Tawny Tesconi who were not in attendance at the July meeting.

### General Manager's Report Out

- Ted Eliot passed away in early August. He had a long history of public service. He and his wife Pat donated an easement on their Sonoma Mountain property that included a trail to Jack London State Park. He was the co-chair of the Measure F campaign and served on the Ag + Open Space Advisory Committee. Mr. Keene would like the meeting to be adjourned in memory of Ted.
- Mr. Keene introduced the new youth member, Alex Wood. Alex is a recent graduate from Santa Clara University with a B.S. in Marketing and Spanish, with a passion for conservation and sustainable agriculture. He introduced himself to the committee.
- A grant for the Silva acquisition near Lake Sonoma will go to the Board on October 22, 2019.
- Approval for fencing on the Oken property will go to the Board on November 5, 2019.
- The Matching Grant Program guidelines and revisions will go to the Board on November 12, 2019.
- Taylor Mountain's Cooper Creek addition and the Jacobsen Ranch acquisition are going to the Board on December 10, 2019.
- The Vital Lands Initiative draft will go to the Board on December 16, 2019.
- The Stewardship Workshop update will go to the Board on February 4, 2020.
  
- Mr. Keene announced that after the meeting, some of the members of the Advisory Committee will join staff on a tour of two Ag + Open Space owned properties, the Dogbane Preserve located north of Santa Rosa, and Oken, located at the northern end of Rohnert Park. Early next year, staff will present a Stewardship Workshop to the Board and we thought it might be helpful for members to see a couple of the fee land properties and hear about the land management activities on each.
- Aldo Mercado, County Counsel, reminded the committee members and staff that the site tour is not a public meeting, and there would be no public comment. Members will not be together in numbers that would form a quorum pursuant to the Brown Act. A discussion item will be included as part of the October 24, 2019 regular meeting for follow up discussion and public comment on this topic. Members were asked to please refrain from any formal discussion of this topic until that time.

### Subcommittee Report Out

The Advisory Committee currently has one active subcommittee, the Matching Grant Program. Chair Dell'Osso announced there will be a meeting next week but no report out tonight.

### Projects in Negotiation

Silva acquisition near Lake Sonoma will go to the Board on October 22, 2019.

Taylor Mountain's Cooper Creek addition and the Jacobsen Ranch acquisition are going to the Board on December 10, 2019.



**Announcements from Advisory Committee Members and Members of the Public**

There were no announcements from members of the committee or the public.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:27 pm in the memory of Ted Eliot.

Next Meeting: October 24, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson  
*Advisory Committee Secretary*





**AG + OPEN SPACE**  
SONOMA COUNTY

**ATTACHMENT “B”**

**DATE:** October 16, 2019 (for October 24, 2019 meeting)

**TO:** Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Jennifer Kuszmar, Matching Grant Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** Summary of DRAFT Updates to the Matching Grant Program Guidelines

Background

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) offers a competitive Matching Grant Program (Program) for projects within or near the County’s urban areas. The Program is borne out of the enabling legislation, Measures C and F and the accompanying Expenditure Plan. The Program is described in paragraph 5 of the Expenditure Plan as follows:

*“5. Other open space projects include but are not limited to, urban open space and recreation projects within and near incorporated cities and other urbanized areas of Sonoma County. Funds for these projects shall be available to cities, the County and other entities through a matching grant program, with preference given to acquisition and development of projects that link communities. Examples of these projects include creek restoration and enhancement, such as along the Petaluma River, Santa Rosa Creek and Laguna de Santa Rosa, trails, athletic fields, and urban greenspace.”*

Since 1990, the Program has provided nearly \$27 million in funding toward projects in all of the County’s nine incorporated cities and multiple unincorporated areas, allowing our partners to leverage funding to develop diverse and innovative projects throughout Sonoma County’s communities. To date, the Program has accepted 52 projects and has protected nearly 500 acres of urban open space. With funding from the Matching Grant Program, our partners have opened 27 new parks to the public and have restored or enhanced over 300 acres of natural habitats including urban creeks, marshes and wetlands, and riparian habitats. All projects funded through the Program are protected forever through a conservation easement.

Ag + Open Space staff coordinates the Program with support from a Matching Grant Subcommittee (Subcommittee) comprised of representatives from the Advisory Committee and Fiscal Oversight Commission. The Subcommittee assists staff in evaluating applications and recommending projects

for funding and also participates in the development and revision of the Program Guidelines for eventual consideration and adoption by the Ag + Open Space's Board of Directors (Board).

#### Program Activity 2009 - present

Over the last several years, the Program has become more formalized. Following each funding cycle Ag + Open Space seeks input to identify ways to enhance and improve the Program. All improvements to date have resulted directly from input from our Board, Advisory Committee, Fiscal Oversight Commission, applicants, staff, as well as feedback we have heard from our partners. Over the last several years, there have been a number of updates and refinements to the Program to create a more formal, transparent, and efficient process.

In 2009, the Board adopted a number of revisions to the Program including requiring a 1:1 match, imposing limits to the amount of match allowable for costs associated with operations and maintenance to no more than 50 percent, and placing limitations on impervious surfaces on Program-funded projects.

In 2011, the Board approved a significant update of the Program. This update reflected a number of improvements to the Guidelines including administrative requirements such as demonstration of the applicant's governing body's approval to submit the funding application, time limits for implementation of projects, and revised and expanded criteria for evaluating projects. These programmatic updates affected all new and active projects at the time of Board approval.

In both the 2009 and 2011 Program updates, staff worked with the Subcommittee and solicited feedback from applicants, partners, members of the public, as well as the Advisory Committee, Fiscal Oversight Commission and Board of Directors to inform these revisions. Following the 2016 and 2018 Program cycle, staff and the Subcommittee found that additional refinements to the Program were necessary to provide additional clarity to applicants and improved transparency in the evaluation process.

Following feedback from our Board, Advisory Committee, Fiscal Oversight Commission, applicants, staff, and other stakeholders, Ag + Open Space is preparing recommendations to update our Matching Grant Program Guidelines for consideration by our Board of Directors on November 12, 2019.

#### 2020 Program Revisions

The following is a summary of the main topics of discussion for the update to the 2020 MGP Guidelines and our recommended responses based on input from the MGP Subcommittee, Advisory Committee, Fiscal Oversight Commission, and staff. At their meeting on October 3,

2019, the MGP Subcommittee supported these recommendations. At their meeting on October 4, 2019, staff provided an update on the MGP to the Fiscal Oversight Commission. The Commissioners expressed support for the recommendations below. We want to present these recommendations to the full Advisory Committee to receive any additional comments prior to presenting to the Board of Directors on November 12, 2019.

1. Program Funding: We have received significant feedback that we should consider increasing the funding for the Matching Grant Program. The General Manager is recommending \$4 million for the 2020 Matching Grant Program. This is a \$2 million increase from recent MGP funding cycles. Through the Vital Lands Initiative planning process, Ag + Open Space will be presenting a proposed funding allocation for the Matching Grant Program as well as other areas of our work.
2. Program Cycle: For the past several years, the Matching Grant Program has been offered on a biennial basis. We have received requests to consider offering the program every year or on a rolling basis. At this time, we are recommending to continue to offer the program every two years. The primary reason for this is due to the internal capacity at Ag + Open Space. In order to run the Program every year, we would need to hire at least one additional staff member that would take additional resources (estimated at approximately \$190,000 annually). Additionally, since the Matching Grant Program protects several properties in every funding cycle, increasing the frequency of the program could result in increased Stewardship costs. Finally, it has not been our experience that there have been missed opportunities to fund projects because of running the program biennially. Should such a circumstance arise, it is within the Board's purview to direct staff to consider a project outside of the regular funding cycle.
3. Capital Replacement Funding ("Rehabilitation of Existing Facilities"): We have been asked to consider revising the Guidelines to allow MGP funding to be used toward capital improvement projects such as removing old or failing park infrastructure and replacing it with amenities that meet the same or similar purpose. When the Board of Directors adopted updated MGP Guidelines in 2012, projects that "solely rehabilitate existing facilities" were ineligible for funding. We are recommending that these types of costs that are typically considered operations and maintenance or rehabilitation of existing facilities remain ineligible for funding. The rationale behind this limitation is to provide funding for projects that best support the intention of the Matching Grant Program by offering creation of new open space areas within our communities.



4. Match Requirements: since 2007, the Matching Grant Program has set the match requirement for all projects at 1:1. We have been asked to consider reducing match for non-profit partners and/or eliminating match for these applicants. Our recommendation is to keep the match requirement at 1:1 for all applicants to continue to maximize leverage of Ag + Open Space funding. In addition, a secure match is a strong indicator of an applicant's ability to implement a proposed project. Projects may be evaluated on the amount of match secured.
5. Program Intent: The proposed updates to the Guidelines and associated application and evaluation materials will focus on the intent of the Program to encourage applications from projects that create or expand new open space opportunities in our cities and communities.
6. Improved Transparency in Project Review, Evaluation, and Recommendation Process: We have received widespread input to provide improved transparency in our evaluation and selection process. Revised guidelines will provide clear and direct links between the MGP application and evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria will aid in clear decision making to prioritize the most competitive projects that meet the intent of the Matching Grant Program.
7. Project Performance: We have been asked to consider how to address previous project performance in the MGP application process. In some cases, an MGP applicant who has previously received MGP funding may apply for funding for additional phases of a project or a new project. The MGP application will include a question about previous performance on MGP funded projects. Ag + Open Space may condition any future funding on the successful completion of current projects or other remedies.
8. Prioritizing Projects in Fire and Flood Affected Areas: As proposed in the 2018 MGP funding cycle, the 2020 MGP funding cycle will prioritize eligible and competitive projects that occur in communities that were impacted by recent wildfires and flood events. These projects must still meet the intent of the program and otherwise be competitive, but will be given additional consideration.

PROJECT	Acreage (approximate)	Supervisory District	Acquisition Plan Category	Project Design	Appraisal Process	Approvals/Baseline	Escrow	Comments
Arrowhead Ranch (Maas)	245	2	Farms & Ranches	x				On hold at request of owner
El Recreo	289	1	Greenbelts & Scenic Hillside	x				CE under negotiation
Gloeckner-Turner Ranch	3,364	5	Water, Wildlife & Natural Areas	x	x			Appraisal process
Jacobsen Ranches	127	2	Greenbelts & Scenic Hillside	x	x			
Joseph Camozzi Dairy	403	2	Farms & Ranches	x				CE under negotiation
LaFranchi (Oak Ridge Angus)	1,189	4	Farms & Ranches	x				CE under negotiation
Mattos Dairy	866	2	Farms & Ranches	x	x			Offer made
McClelland Dairy	337	2	Farms & Ranches	x	x			On hold at request of owner
Preston Farm	133	4	Farms & Ranches					Initiating project
Silva	4,441	5	Water, Wildlife & Natural Areas	x				CE under negotiation
Sonoma Developmental Center 5 (Transfor	945	1	Greenbelts & Scenic Hillside					Land protection proposal underway
Torr	522	5	Recreation & Education		x			Appraisal process
Witt Home Ranch	395	2	Farms & Ranches		x			Initiating project

Total Acres: 13,256

Matching Grant Projects	Acres (approximate)	Supervisory District	Location	Begin Grant Process	Appraisal Process	Approvals/Baseline	Escrow	Comments
AmeriCorps Trail	12	5	Sebastopol					Initiating project
Andy's Unity Park	4	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x				Tracking match
Badger Park	20	4	Healdsburg					Initiating project
Bayer Farm Development	6**	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	x	x	x	Reimbursement ongoing, Grant term extended
Colgan Creek Phase 3 MG*	7	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a	x	x	Extension granted to 10/14/21
Crane Creek Regional Trail*	6	1	East of Rohnert Park	x	n/a			Drafting documents. Grant term extended to 12/6/
Denman Reach	2	2	North Petaluma	x	n/a			Drafting documents
Falletti Ranch	4	2	Cotati	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Forever Forestville*	4	5	Downtown Forestville	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Graton Green	1	5	Downtown Graton	x	x	x		Escrow closed April 5, 2019. Tracking match.
Guerneville River Park Phase 2*	5	5	Central Guerneville	x	x	x		Initiating project
Helen Putnam Regional Park Extension	56	2	Petaluma					Initiating project
Maxwell Farms	79	1	Northwest of Sonoma	x	n/a			Drafting Documents
McNear Peninsula Addition	21	2	Petaluma					Drafting documents
Paula Lane Open Space Preserve	11	2	West Petaluma	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
River Lane	1	5	West of Guerneville	x	x	x	x	Finalizing documents
Riverfront Regional Park Recreation Improv	300**	4	West of Windsor	x	n/a			Initiating project
Roseland Creek Community Park - Phase 1	3	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x				Drafting documents
Roseland Village Public Space	1	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a			Drafting documents
Southeast Santa Rosa Greenway	61	1	Southeast Santa Rosa	x		x		Initiating project
SMART Pathway – Hearn to Bellevue*	6	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a	x		Finalizing documents
SMART Pathway - Payran to S. Point	14	2	Petaluma	x	n/a			Drafting documents
Steamer Landing Park Development (McNe	27**	2	Downtown Petaluma	x	n/a			Initiating project
Taylor Mtn RPOSP - Cooper Creek Addition	54	3	Southeast Santa Rosa					Drafting documents

Total Acres: 236

Project Status Chart

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

**ATTACHMENT "C"**

10/21/2019

\* District approved a 2-year extension

\*\* Restoration/Development Project on previous acquisition.