



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 19-1151

Agenda Date: 2/11/2020

Item No.: 7.1.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Approve Fiscal Year 2020 Grants for Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Review and discuss staff's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020 Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program (Safe, Clean Water Program) grant awards;
- B. Authorize the launch of a pilot Priority A2: Water Conservation Mini-Grant Pilot Program, using the Priority A2: Water Conservation benefits and funding;
- C. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to approve and execute agreements for Priority B3: Pollution Prevention grants in a total amount not-to-exceed \$478,969 for five (5) projects;
- D. Approve the revised Grant Allocation Matrix for Priority D3: Restore Wildlife Habitat grants and begin implementing the revised matrix with the FY20 grant cycle;
- E. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to approve and execute agreements for Priority D3: Restore Wildlife Habitat grants based on the following options below:
 - i. Using the current Grant Allocation Matrix structure for one (1) project in a total amount not-to-exceed \$286,078; or
 - ii. Using the revised Grant Allocation Matrix structure for two (2) projects in a total amount not-to-exceed \$580,531; and
- F. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to approve and execute amendments to the recommended grant agreements, extending their terms up to twelve additional months and with no revisions to their not-to-exceed grant amounts.

SUMMARY:

Background

The Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program (Safe, Clean Water Program) provides seven grant cycles for each program priority. FY20 is a grant cycle year for Priority A2: Water Conservation (A2 Water Conservation), Priority B3: Pollution Prevention (B3 Pollution Prevention),

and Priority D3: Restore Wildlife Habitat (D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat).

On August 30, 2019, Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) released information to the public regarding the availability of grant funding via the public website and new online grants management system, Fluxx, and requested proposals to fund projects for A2 Water Conservation, B3 Pollution Prevention, and D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat under the Safe, Clean Water Program. Grant applications were accepted through November 1, 2019.

Outreach efforts for all grant programs included the following:

- Press release issued in September 2019
- Blog post on September 3, 2019
- Nextdoor posts to all Board Districts in the county on September 3, 2019
- Four (4) Social media posts and boosted posts throughout the solicitation period
- CEO Bulletin during the week of August 30 to September 5, 2019
- Telemundo news coverage on September 3, 2019, featuring an existing grant project at the Children's Discovery Museum
- ABC 7 news coverage on September 6, 2019
- Water Commission announcement at the meeting on October 23, 2019
- Youth Commission email announcement on September 3, 2019
- Booth duty event promotion at 14 events between August 31 and October 26, 2019
- Pre-proposal workshops conducted on September 18 and 20, 2019
- RFP announcement to existing key stakeholders in Santa Clara County and the grant program distribution list of more than 200 recipients on August 30, 2019
- Notifications sent to local elected officials, city managers, and executive leaders in the County
- Notifications sent to countywide neighborhood associations, community leaders, civic organizations, and local nonprofits
- Other direct outreach through various programs, including Creek Stewardship, Recycled and Purified Water, and Education Outreach.

Proposal Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

A total of 12 applications were received for the FY20 grant opportunities.

- Three (3) applications were received for A2 Water Conservation grants
- Five (5) applications for B3 Pollution Prevention grants
- Four (4) applications for D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat grants

Staff formed a review panel for each of the three grant priorities to evaluate the applications. The review panels consisted of internal and external subject matter experts on water conservation, pollution prevention, habitat restoration, environmental stewardship, and permits and regulations. External panelists included staff from City of San Jose, City of Santa Clara and San Jose State University. The reviewers scored the proposals based on the evaluation criteria identified in the proposal guidelines that were approved by the Board on February 26, 2019 (see Attachment 1).

Funding Recommendations

Staff determined the recommended funding amounts based on the grant allocation process that was approved by the Board on February 26, 2019 (see Attachment 1). According to the approved allocation process, the recommended funding amount for each application is based on the average scores from the review panelists.

Scores, funding recommendations and calculated funding allocations for each of the grant priorities are presented in Attachment 2.

A2 Water Conservation

The review panel recommended approving none of the three A2 Water Conservation grant applications for a standard grant award. The panel did not recommend the projects be awarded grant funding based on the lack of innovation, high cost for minimal water savings, and the lack of research plans behind the proposals. Since the evaluation, one grantee withdrew their application upon receiving full project funding from another agency.

Not recommended A2 Water Conservation Projects:

- DripCube Inc. for Smart Irrigation Controller Adaptation in Santa Clara County
- IoTelligent, LLC for WaterVault Leak Detection and Analytics with Campbell Union High School District
- Irvington High School for Save Water, Save California Initiative (withdrew)

Priority A2: Water Conservation Mini-Grant Pilot Program

Due to the low number of applicants and low number of eligible projects for the A2 Water Conservation grant opportunity, staff recommends developing a pilot mini-grant program that mirrors the current Board-approved D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat mini-grant program.

The mini-grant program is designed to encourage broader community involvement by providing up to \$5,000 per grant project using a streamlined application and evaluation process. Awarding mini-grant funding for projects that meet A2 criteria would allow grantees to kick-start projects and gain data to support an application for future funding opportunities.

Staff recommends launching a pilot A2 Water Conservation mini-grant program that utilizes the current D3 mini-grant program structure, requirements and provisions; requires the A2 benefits; and allocates up to \$100,000 of the A2 FY20 grant funding available for A2 mini-grants. The A2 Water Conservation pilot mini-grant program is proposed to be available through December 31, 2020 or until all available funding is awarded.

Should the Board approve the A2 Water Conservation pilot mini-grant program, staff will return to the Board at the end of the one-year pilot with an evaluation regarding the effectiveness of the program and a recommendation for the Board's consideration regarding whether to continue the A2 Water Conservation mini-grant program in future years.

B3 Pollution Prevention

The review panel recommended approving five of the five B3 Pollution Prevention grant applications for grant awards based on their clear objectives and anticipated outcomes in addressing pollution prevention, environmental stewardship, supporting volunteers, and educating the community.

The B3 Pollution Prevention Grant Allocation Matrix determined funding recommendations as follows:

- **Tier 1:** Proposals with an average score between 85-100 points will receive between 70-100% of the requested funding.
- **Tier 2:** Proposals with an average score between 70-84 points will receive between 30-60% of the requested funding

Recommended B3 Pollution Prevention Projects:

1. Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose for Exploration Portal: Preventing Pollution for a total amount not-to-exceed \$144,500
2. Grassroots Ecology for Community Based Stewardship of Green Stormwater Infrastructure for a total amount not-to-exceed \$89,331.60
3. West Valley Clean Water Program Authority for School Site Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans for a total amount not-to-exceed \$35,088
4. County of Santa Clara for Green Business Program for a total amount not-to-exceed \$120,000
5. Guadalupe River Park Conservancy for Reducing the Impacts of Litter Along the Guadalupe River Trail for a total amount not-to-exceed \$90,049

D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat

The review panel recommended modifications to the D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat Grant Allocation Matrix. The evaluation criteria for the D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat grants allows full points to be assigned only if the project includes all project benefits that are eligible for funding under D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat. However, an eligible project only needs to provide one of the benefits under D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat to be eligible for funding. Therefore, staff recommends modifying the Grant Allocation Matrix for D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat projects to shift the point range for Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding to reflect the amount of points a project may receive by meeting one of the D3 benefits.

The current D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat Grant Allocation Matrix:

- **Tier 1:** Proposals with an average score between 170-200 points will receive between 70-100% of the requested funding.
- **Tier 2:** Proposals with an average score between 140-169 points will receive between 30-60% of the requested funding

The recommended revised D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat Grant Allocation Matrix:

- **Tier 1:** Proposals with an average score between 140-200 points will receive between 70-100% of the requested funding.
- **Tier 2:** Proposals with an average score between 110-139 points will receive between 30-60% of the requested funding

If the current grant allocation matrix is applied, then the review panel recommends approving one of the four D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat grant applications for grant award.

Recommended D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat Project:

1. Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority for Pond Restoration Project for California Red-legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle in Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space Preserve for a

total amount not-to-exceed \$286,078

If the Board approves staff's recommendation to revise the grant allocation matrix, then the review panel recommends approving two of the four D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat grant applications for grant awards.

Revised Recommended D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat Projects:

1. Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority for Pond Restoration Project for California Red-legged Frog and Western Pond Turtle in Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space Preserve for a total amount not-to-exceed \$476,796
2. Grassroots Ecology for Re-Oaking Silicon Valley for a total amount not-to-exceed \$103,735

The panel did not recommend two (2) of the four projects because of concerns with the budget and costs, and direct alignment with the D3 benefits.

Not Recommended D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat Projects:

- San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory for Maintaining and Expanding Forster's Tern Nesting Colonies at Pond A16 for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project
- San Jose Evergreen Community College District for MAP in FlexFactor H20

If the Board approves staff's grant funding recommendations, the CEO will execute grant agreements for the awarded projects, after they comply with CEQA requirements.

Grant Agreement Provisions

The grant agreements will specify the following expiration dates, which will commence once they are fully executed: three (3) years for B3 Pollution Prevention projects and five (5) years for D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat projects.

Grant agreements will include provisions to allow for no-cost term extensions, if necessary and appropriate, to achieve project outcomes. If the Board approves staff's recommendation, the CEO will have authority to execute such amendments; however, any amendments resulting changes in scope of work or not-to exceed funding would require Board approval.

The grant agreements will contain provisions related to communications including:

- inclusion of Safe, Clean Water logo on all project materials presented to the public;
- all materials that include Safe, Clean Water logo are subject to review and approval by Valley Water;
- mention of "Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program" as appropriate when funding sources for the project are printed or presented;
- early notification to and invitations provided to Valley Water for any project related events; and
- invitation with speaking roles for Board of Directors members to project groundbreaking and opening ceremonies.

The grant agreements will also contain provisions requiring grantees provide a web posting of their

final report and prepare a project fact sheet or make a presentation to the Board or at an event hosted by Valley Water when the project is completed.

Additionally, grantees will be required to report project data, such as demographics of participants and measurable outcomes of all activities that involve community engagement, education, or outreach for staff to assess impacts of the grant funding.

Other provisions may include clear success measures, adherence to the project schedule, and guidelines regarding when contract revisions are necessary for changes in the project scope, schedule, and budget.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Financial impact associated with this item is limited to the proposals approved for funding per Board action.

The A2 Water Conservation pilot mini-grant program in the total amount of up to \$100,000 is funded in the FY20 budget under project 26061008.

The five B3 Pollution Prevention grants in the total amount of \$478,969 are funded in the FY20 budget under project 26061006.

The one or two D3 Restore Wildlife Habitat grants in the total amount of \$286,078 or \$580,531 are funded in the FY20 budget under project 26061007.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA (per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(a)) because it does not commit the Valley Water to a definite course of action, and therefore has no potential to result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect environmental impact. Specifically, it is a government fiscal activity which is not a project because it does not involve commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant environmental impact, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4).

The Board action is approval of staff recommendations to fund projects following project-specific CEQA compliance, if required, and is not a commitment to fund those projects. It does not foreclose Valley Water's exercise of discretion with respect to a project, including but not limited to considering other feasible alternatives or mitigation measures to avoid or minimize a project's impacts, requiring a grantee to make such modifications deemed necessary to reduce a project's impacts, or determining not to proceed with one or more component of a project.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Evaluation Criteria

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Attachment 2: Scoring Matrix

Attachment 3: Pilot A2 Mini-Grant Evaluation Form

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Rick Callender, 408-630-2017