

**2024 Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Grant Program Award Recommendations and
 Project Descriptions**

The PCA Grant Program 2024 Grant Guidelines and Call for Proposals established grant eligibility, funding targets, and evaluation criteria and detailed a two-step application and evaluation process. Eligible applicants and project activities remained similar to prior PCA grant cycles. Consistent with the MTC Planning Committee and ABAG Administrative Committee guidance, funding targets were established based on project location (invest a minimum of 50 percent of funds in PCAs in Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties and fund a minimum of one project per county), project type (to fund a mix of eligible project activities) and project purpose (to invest a minimum of \$6 million in projects that result in long-term protection, restoration and enhancement of habitats and agricultural lands).

Based on the evaluation of the applications, staff are recommending approval of \$8.5 million in PCA grants for the following projects (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Recommended PCA Grant Program Project Awards

| # | Applicant | Project Name | Project County | Proposed Award |
|---|---|---|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy | Evolving Shorelines Project at Bothin Marsh | Marin | \$ 670,000 |
| 2 | City of Santa Rosa | Southeast Greenway | Sonoma | \$ 750,000 |
| 3 | Sonoma County Regional Parks | Sonoma Schellville Trail Design | Sonoma | \$ 550,000 |
| 4 | Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District | Phinney Fee Acquisition | Napa | \$ 1,000,000 |
| 5 | Napa County Public Works | Napa Valley Vine Trail - Vista Carneros Segment | Napa | \$ 750,000 |
| 6 | Solano County Resource Management | Farm to Market Phase 4 | Solano | \$ 750,000 |

| # | Applicant | Project Name | Project County | Proposed Award |
|--------------|--|---|----------------|--------------------|
| 7 | Contra Costa Resource Conservation District | Rangeland Enhancement through Livestock Pond Restoration | Contra Costa | \$ 280,000 |
| 8 | East Bay Regional Park District | Tidewater Expansion at Martin Luther King Jr Regional Shoreline | Alameda | \$ 1,000,000 |
| 9 | Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency | Richmond Ranch Acquisition Project | Santa Clara | \$ 1,000,000 |
| 10 | Peninsula Open Space Trust | Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project | Santa Clara | \$ 250,000 |
| 11 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority | Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space Preserve Regional Bay Area Ridge Trail Expansion | Santa Clara | \$ 250,000 |
| 12 | County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation | Upper Stevens Creek Trail Project | Santa Clara | \$ 500,000 |
| 13 | City and County of San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department | Visitacion Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvement Project | San Francisco | \$ 750,000 |
| TOTAL | | | | \$8,500,000 |

1. Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Evolving Shorelines Project at Bothin Marsh (\$670,000) - The proposed project would protect, restore, and enhance the tidal wetlands of Bothin Marsh and ensure continued public access through nature-based strategies. Key to the restoration is realigning a segment of the Bay Trail from its existing flood-prone and ecologically impactful location to the edge of the tidal marsh while improving public access, safety, and connectivity of shoreline trails. PCA Grant Program funding would support environmental review and regulatory permit applications for the proposed project.

- 2. City of Santa Rosa, Southeast Greenway (\$750,000)** - The Southeast Greenway is an approximately 58-acre area of undeveloped land that was previously intended to be an extension of Highway 12 and was recently transferred from Caltrans to the City of Santa Rosa. The proposed project would advance the City of Santa Rosa's community-wide planning process to further develop the vision for the Southeast Greenway and craft a comprehensive and well-supported Master Plan for a new park with multiple environmental and community benefits.
- 3. Sonoma County Regional Parks, Sonoma Schellville Trail Design (\$550,000)** - The Sonoma Schellville Trail will convert an abandoned railroad corridor to a 2.8-mile Class 1 bike path along 8th Street East, between East Napa Street and Highways 12/121, near the City of Sonoma in unincorporated Sonoma County. Sonoma County Regional Parks is scheduled to complete acquisition from the Union Pacific Railroad and PCA Grant Program funding would support completing trail design, environmental review, and permit applications.
- 4. Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, Phinney Fee Acquisition (\$1,000,000)** - The 523-acre Phinney acquisition would connect 9,000 acres of existing protected land, allow formal dedication of a 4 mile section of Bay Area Ridge Trail, allow conversion of the same 4 mile section to full multi-use trail (horses are currently not allowed), fill in a key gap in a priority wildlife corridor, protect rare species, and help ensure and protect municipal water supplies. PCA Grant Program funds would leverage a recent grant award from SCC and allow the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, in partnership with the Land Trust of Napa County, to acquire and permanently protect 523 acres.
- 5. Napa County Public Works, Napa Valley Vine Trail, Vista Carneros Segment (\$750,000)** - The Vista Carneros Vine Trail Project would close an approximately 3 mile key gap in the Napa Valley Vine Trail by developing a Class I trail from Riversound to Airport Road. At the north end, the project would join the existing Riversound Vine Trail segment, through Napa's Kennedy Park, and up to Yountville (12.5 miles). PCA Grant Program funding would support completion of the engineering design and CEQA and NEPA documents necessary to be "shovel ready" for a construction grant in 2026.

- 6. Solano County Resource Management, Farm to Market Phase 4 (\$750,000)** - The Suisun Valley Farm to Market Phase 4 Project would improve access to Suisun Valley farmlands through biking, pedestrian, and multimodal facilities, enhancing connectivity for Solano County residents and tourists to the diverse offerings of the Suisun Valley. PCA Grant Program funds would support the final phase of a decade-long effort to invest into Suisun Valley's farm and market routes and encourage purchase and use of local agricultural products.
- 7. Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, Rangeland Enhancement through Livestock Pond Restoration (\$280,000)** – The Contra Costa Resource Conservation District would restore and enhance livestock ponds across Contra Costa County that provide water for livestock and provide critical breeding habitat for the federally-listed California red-legged frog and the state-listed California tiger salamander. PCA Grant Program funds would restore livestock ponds, establish an annual monitoring program, and development of an education and outreach program.
- 8. East Bay Regional Park District, Tidewater Expansion at Martin Luther King Jr Regional Shoreline (\$1,000,000)** - The Tidewater Expansion project would transform an 8-acre site creating new park acreage in a formerly redlined community impacted by decades of disinvestment. The project would develop a park with a multi-use turf area, a nature play area, several small and group picnic spaces, paved and natural trails, an outdoor classroom, two waterfront overlooks, a restroom, and boat storage. The PCA Grant Program would support funding for construction and construction management, leveraging \$14 million in other funding.
- 9. Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency, Richmond Ranch Acquisition Project (\$1,000,000)** - The 3,654-acre Richmond Ranch acquisition would protect a biodiversity hotspot and contribute to the recovery of imperiled species in the Coyote Valley. The property contains over 500 acres of serpentine grassland, 14 acres of riparian woodland, 7 ponds, 34 miles of streams, numerous springs and over 1,500 acres of oak woodland, and includes opportunities for future Bay Area Ridge Trail and access enhancements. The PCA Grant Program would fund a portion of the acquisition (approximately 1,218 acres) by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency.

10. Peninsula Open Space Trust, Coyote Valley Wildlife Connectivity Planning Project

(\$250,000) - This project would address barriers to wildlife movement in Coyote Valley – a key regional wildlife corridor. PCA Grant Program funds would identify actions that increase the permeability of major roadway and rail barriers in Coyote Valley by synthesizing existing data, identifying and evaluating the feasibility of various wildlife permeability enhancements, developing conceptual plans, and advancing designs, planning, environmental review, and permitting to deliver a shovel-ready project. Recommended enhancements may include new wildlife crossing structures, retrofits and maintenance activities for existing underpasses, directional fencing, and habitat restoration.

11. Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space

Preserve Regional Bay Area Ridge Trail Expansion (\$250,000) - The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority manages the Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space Preserve, approximately 20 miles from downtown San José. PCA Grant Program funding would support planning and construction of up to 5 miles of new regional trails and amenities at the Preserve. This new trail would close a gap in both the planned Bay Area Ridge Trail and open an additional 1,800 acres in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains to public access to provide a backcountry experience, building off a new accessible interpretive trail and other features at the Preserve.

12. County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation, Upper Stevens Creek Trail Project

(\$500,000) - The Stevens Creek Trail is a key sub-regional trail identified in the County of Santa Clara's Countywide Trails Master Plan that is intended to ultimately connect the San Francisco Bay Trail to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The proposed project would complete planning for an approximately 5.7-mile multi-use (hiking, bicycling, and equestrian) portion of the Stevens Creek Trail. The project is a partnership between the Santa Clara County Parks Department and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The PCA Grant Program would support the trail planning process, including a feasibility study, trail planning and design, and CEQA process.

13. City and County of San Francisco, Recreation and Parks Department, Visitation

Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvement Project (\$750,000) - The Visitation Avenue project would support construction of new pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Visitation Avenue corridor in southeastern McLaren Park to calm traffic, provide improved access to Visitation Valley Middle School, and better connect Visitation Valley and Sunnydale neighborhoods to McLaren Park's program areas and trail network. The PCA Grant Program funding would support environmental review and construction.

Non-Award Recommendations

Based on the evaluation of letters of interest and/or applications, staff are recommending non-award to the following projects (Table 2). Non-awarded projects are eligible to reapply for funding in the next PCA Grant round. Staff is available to assist applicants with developing more competitive proposals in future rounds.

Table 2. PCA Grant Program Applications Not Recommended for Awards

| County | Applicant | Project Title | Requested Funds |
|---------------|---|---|------------------------|
| Marin | Trust for Public Lands | Tiburon Ridge Acquisition | \$3,000,000 |
| Solano | Solano Land Trust | Riparian Corridor Restoration Planning, King Ranch | \$ 331,241 |
| Sonoma | City of Petaluma | Adobe Creek Trail: Shollenberger Park to Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park | \$ 300,000 |
| Sonoma | Petaluma River Park Foundation | Petaluma River Park | \$749,000 |
| San Mateo | City of Brisbane | Brisbane Acquisition | \$635,000 |
| Contra Costa | Contra Costa Resource Conservation District | Bay Point Green Infrastructure | \$1,000,000 |
| Napa | City of Napa | Napa Valley Vine Trail / SF Bay Trail Gap Closure | \$1,200,000 |
| Marin | City of Mill Valley | Mill Valley Baylands Public Access Project | \$900,000 |
| Alameda | Lake Merritt Institute | Lake Merritt Enhancement Initiative | \$ 100,000 |

| County | Applicant | Project Title | Requested Funds |
|-------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Sonoma | City of Petaluma | Petaluma River Trail: US 101 and Rail Crossing Gap Closure | \$ 515,000 |
| Santa Clara | County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation | SCC Parks Acquisition of Undisclosed Property | \$ 1,000,000 |

PCA Grant Program Background:

The PCA Grant Program – funded through the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program – was initiated by MTC in collaboration with the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) in 2013 to provide funding to cities, counties, park districts, utility districts and other agencies and non-profits to acquire, enhance, or improve designated PCAs. Since the PCA Grant Program’s inception, MTC and the SCC have jointly disbursed over \$30 million in two rounds to support 58 projects in designated PCAs across the nine Bay Area counties (Table 3). Prior PCA Grant Program rounds were divided into two separately managed sub-programs—the North Bay Program, which included the counties of Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma; and the Peninsula, Southern, and Eastern Bay Counties Program, including Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties. The North Bay Program was managed by the four North Bay County Transportation Agencies (CTAs) who developed additional program criteria, project solicitations, and project recommendations, and solicited approval for those grant recommendations from the Commission.

Table 3. Prior and Proposed PCA Grant Awards by County

| County | Round 1 (2015) | Round 2 (2019) | TOTAL | Round 3 (Proposed Awards) | TOTAL (Prior + Proposed) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Alameda | \$1,750,000 | \$1,021,000 | \$2,771,000 | \$1,000,000 | \$3,771,000 |
| Contra Costa | \$1,219,711 | \$2,950,000 | \$4,169,711 | \$280,000 | \$4,449,711 |
| Marin | \$1,250,000 | \$2,050,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$670,000 | \$3,970,000 |
| Napa | \$1,250,000 | \$2,050,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$1,750,000 | \$5,050,000 |
| San Francisco | \$1,667,589 | \$1,694,000 | \$3,361,589 | \$750,000 | \$4,111,589 |
| San Mateo | \$1,600,000 | \$1,552,000 | \$3,152,000 | \$0 | \$3,152,000 |
| Santa Clara | \$712,700 | \$2,253,000 | \$2,965,700 | \$2,000,000 | \$4,965,700 |
| Solano | \$1,250,000 | \$2,050,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$750,000 | \$4,050,000 |
| Sonoma | \$1,250,000 | \$2,050,000 | \$3,300,000 | \$1,300,000 | \$4,600,000 |
| Regional | | \$530,000 | \$530,000 | \$0 | \$530,000 |
| | \$11,950,000 | \$17,179,000 | \$30,150,000 | \$8,500,000 | \$38,650,000 |