

2.2.1. NATURAL LANDS, LOCAL BEACHES, WATER CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION PROGRAM

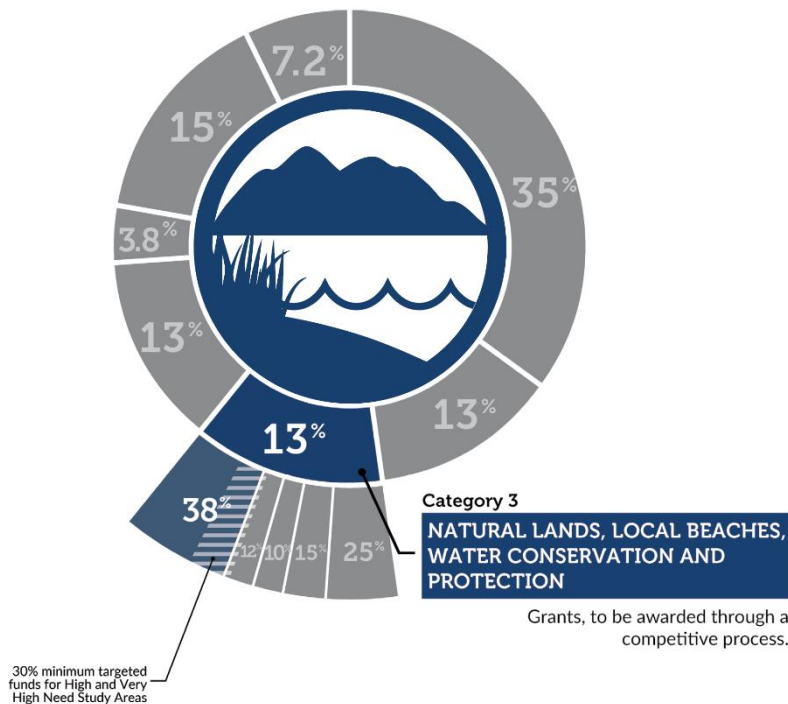
This is a Capital Projects grant program funded from Category 3.

Goals

Natural Lands, Local Beaches, Water Conservation and Protection General Competitive Program (Category 3) projects should improve and protect open space, watersheds, and water resources through planning, acquisition, development, improvement, and restoration of multi-benefit park projects that promote, improve, or protect clean local water supplies, habitat improvements, park space, recreation, public access, watershed health, and open space, including improvements or restoration of areas that buffer our rivers, streams, and their tributaries along with the lakes and beaches throughout the County. Priority will be given to projects offering the greatest regional benefit or serving the greatest regional need.

At least thirty percent of these funds will be awarded to projects strictly located in High-Need or Very-High-Need Study Areas, as defined by the most recent Countywide Neighborhood Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. For additional information on this target, refer to Section 1.8.

Funding Amount and Cycle Frequency



Annual Allocation: 38% of Natural Lands, Local Beaches, Water Conservation and Protection funds (Category 3).

Grant Cycle: The first cycle will occur after resolution of current litigation; then every four years thereafter.

Recipients: at least 30% for projects strictly located in High-Need or Very-High-Need Study Areas.

Amount: The dollar amount of funds available is updated annually based on the revenue received by September 15th of each year and awarded at intervals as described in the Competitive Grants Calendar (Figure 3-1).



Project Types

Below is a non-exhaustive list of projects that may be eligible for these grant funds:

Natural Lands/Open Spaces

- Parks
- New or improved access points to mountain, foothill, river, stream, and wetland areas
- Restoration of natural habitat
- Scenic vistas
- Wildlife corridors and habitats
- Habitat gardens
- Nature/Interpretive centers
- Preservation of natural lands
- Tree planting
- Planning and design related projects

Local Beaches

- Active recreation amenities
- New or improved fishing and boating facilities
- Pier/dock improvements
- Replacement of sand
- Restrooms/shower facilities
- Access facilities, including staging areas, roadways, parking lots, and trailheads
- Planning and design related projects

Water Conservation and Protection

- Drainage basins
- Irrigation projects
- Permeable walkways and play surfaces
- Rainwater harvesting
- Revegetation of banks and waterways
- Stormwater capture and other water recycling
- Beach and coastal watershed clean up
- Drinking water improvements
- Lake or reservoir clean up
- Riparian corridor improvements
- River and stream clean-up
- River and stream parkway development
- Acquisitions
- Planning and design related projects



Project Requirements⁷

Applicants must provide proof that the project meets the project eligibility, feasibility, and community engagement requirements listed below.

All projects must include a sign at a prominent location on the project site acknowledging the assistance of RPOSD. The cost of permanent signage development is reimbursable through the grant. RPOSD will provide electronic samples of its graphics for the grantee to use in signage development.

Project Eligibility

Applicants must provide proof that the project meets *all* the following Project Eligibility requirements to apply for a grant award:

- The project plans for, acquires, develops, improves, or restores a multi-benefit park project that promotes, improves, or protects clean local water supplies, habitat improvements, park space, recreation, public access, watershed health, or open space.
- The project is a capital project.
- The project is consistent with the Study Area's long-range park planning documents and assessments.
- The project's requested grant award size is a minimum of \$50,000 and maximum of \$3,700,000.

Project Feasibility

Applicants must provide proof that the project meets *at least one* requirement in each topic area in order to apply for a grant award:

Land Access/Tenure

- Applicant owns the land in question; or
- Applicant has entered into a lease or other use agreement for the land in question; or
- Applicant has concrete plans as to how access or tenure will be acquired or arranged.

Planning and Design Status

- Design documents of 30 percent or greater are complete; or
- Applicant has sketch-level plans for project design and a planned approach as to how and when planning and design will be completed.

Permitting and CEQA Compliance

- Project is exempt from regulatory permits and CEQA; or
- Any necessary permitting and CEQA documents are completed and certified; or
- Applicant has concrete plans as to how and when permitting and CEQA will be completed.

⁷ Requirements vary slightly for Planning and Design project types. Refer to Section 2.4.7 *Project Requirements*. Requirements vary slightly for acquisition project types. Refer to Section 2.2.3 *Project Requirements*.



Adverse Site Conditions

- There are no adverse site conditions that would affect project implementation; or
- Adverse site conditions have been characterized and the applicant has concrete plans for addressing them; or
- Adverse site conditions are known to exist but have not been characterized. Applicant has plans as to how and when these conditions will be addressed, with appropriate budget contingencies in the project budget.

Project Budget and Funding

- Applicant has a detailed budget consistent with the level of planning and design completed to date, as well as a plan for funding to cover the budgeted costs, with appropriate contingencies given the level of planning completed.

Project Schedule

- Applicant has a detailed schedule from grant receipt to project completion that reflects the level of planning, design, permitting and community involvement that will be necessary for the project.

Operations and Maintenance

- The project has an appropriately detailed financial plan for operation and maintenance of the completed project.

Community Engagement

The project must meet the minimum community engagement requirements described in Section 3.3.

Award Size

Requested grant awards must meet the minimum and maximum grant award size requirements:

- Minimum: \$50,000
- Maximum: \$3,700,00

Grant applications will be categorized into award size brackets as shown in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3: Natural Lands, Local Beaches, Water Conservation and Protection Program Award Size Brackets

AWARD SIZE BRACKETS	MINIMUM AWARD SIZE	MAXIMUM AWARD SIZE
Small	\$50,000	\$499,999
Medium	\$500,000	\$999,999
Large	\$1,000,000	\$1,999,999
Jumbo	\$2,000,000	\$3,700,000

Grant applications within each bracket will be evaluated and ranked to determine projects to be awarded grant. Any change to these award bracket limits will be made in future grant announcements.

Projects that require funding beyond these Measure A limits may seek to leverage supplemental funding from other sources.



Project Specific Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be scored using the following criteria. Refer to Section 3.4.2 for additional information on scoring methodology.

Level of Need:

- This will consider whether or not a project or program serves or benefits residents of High-Need or Very-High-Need Study Areas or provides services to and/or recruits a majority of its participants from High-Need or Very-High-Need Study Areas.

Regional Benefits

Examples of projects providing regional benefits or serving regional needs include:

- Rehabilitating, adding, or improving a unique facility, amenity, or natural resource within the service region;
- Adding, rehabilitating or improving any facility, amenity, or natural resource where regional demand/use is high;
- Providing trail connectivity, transit connections beyond the local vicinity, trailhead and/or parking improvements, or ADA improvements;
- Interpretive, educational, programmatic, or other components that encourage regional visitation
- Involving the collaboration of multiple, agencies, or organizations;
- Increasing community value (natural or built) by filling a gap in regional facilities, amenities, or natural resources.

Community Involvement Beyond Minimum Requirements

This is evaluated based on the assessment of submitted community involvement documentation and/or community involvement plan for the proposed project as well as quality of the agency's engagement with the community in past or ongoing projects (in any). Examples include:

- Engaging the community at point(s) in the project when community input could influence the outcome of the project;
- Utilizing multiple inclusive outreach methods that target broad representation of residents and stakeholders;
- Actively seeking to remove barriers to accessing engagement meetings/ events such as scheduling meetings/events in the evenings and/or weekends, providing childcare, providing transportation, and providing refreshments;
- Establishing or leveraging community partnerships with local community-based organizations, citizen advisory groups, and/or school districts to gain support for the project;
- Providing language access services beyond minimum requirements;
- Reflecting community input received during the engagement process in the project's outcome and its components.



Social Multi-benefits

Efforts in providing additional benefits besides recreation that relate to social issues include:

- **Community Safety, Gang Activity Reduction, and Violence Prevention:**
Project includes features that improve safety conditions and visibility through the provision of safe equipment and facilities, and thereby reduce or prevent of gang activity, violence, and crime. Best practices include using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies, such as increasing natural surveillance, reducing isolated spaces, increasing sight lines, and providing adequate lighting. Projects located in areas of high gang activity and violence and incorporate safe design, and/or engage former and current gang members or gang reduction community groups to ensure park safety.
- **Anti-displacement Mitigation:**
Project includes advance displacement avoidance strategies to prevent displacement if a potential unintended consequence associated with the project creates a significant increase in the cost of housing. More points will be scored based on how realistic and proactive the strategies are.
- **Cultural and Language Sensitivity:**
Project incorporates elements that accommodate the cultural and language needs of the served populations, such as multilingual wayfinding and other signage and informational signs or public art related to the surrounding history and culture of the project and area. More points will be scored on the quantity and quality of the proposed cultural and language elements.
- **Interpretive Programs and Education:**
Project incorporates elements that provide interpretation and education to foster user connection and awareness of the environment, the outdoors, and/or recreation, such as incorporating informative signage explaining the project's location, landscape, wildlife, plants, background, and history. More points will be scored on the appropriateness of the proposed interpretive programs and education elements.



Community Health Multi-benefits

Efforts in providing additional benefits besides recreation that relate to community health issues include:

- **Physical Activity:**
Project provides infrastructure and equipment that encourages physical activity. Examples include a combination of playground equipment, exercise equipment, walking and biking paths, and/or trails.
- **Universal Design and Accessibility:**
Project provides infrastructure and equipment that cater to the physical activity of people of all abilities, especially to people with special needs. Examples include access ramps, accessible restrooms, and inclusive recreation options.
- **Safe and Active Transportation:**
Project includes connections to transportation infrastructure to increase the ability of users to travel to and from the project by active forms of transportation such as walking, biking, skateboarding, scootering, etc. Examples include sidewalks, multi-use paths, bikeways, and Safe Routes to School.
- **Social Interaction:**
Project includes elements that promote social interaction, such as safe, attractive, and interactive gathering areas; interpretive and wayfinding signage; public art; and infrastructure for play.

Environmental Multi-Benefits

Efforts in providing additional benefits besides recreation that relate to environmental issues include:

- **Water Quality Improvements and Stormwater Capture and Conservation:**
Project includes features that improve water quality beyond those required by State and local codes and/or features that capture stormwater and attenuate potential flood conditions beyond those required by State and local codes. Examples includes swales, rain gardens, retention basins, pervious pavement, use of drought-tolerant plants, use of drip irrigation, and other ways to use recycled water and reduce runoff.
- **Air Quality Improvements and Greenhouse Gas (GHG Reductions, including Carbon Sequestration):**
Project includes features that reduce existing criterion air pollutant emissions beyond those required by current regulations and/or features that reduce existing GHG emissions beyond those required by current regulations and features to sequester carbon that go beyond typical plantings found in park and open space projects. Examples include tree planting, low allergen palette selection, active transportation options, and sustainable maintenance of amenities.
- **Heat-Island Reductions:**
Project includes features that reduce heat-island effects, in ways beyond typical plantings found in park and open space projects. Examples include use of light colored and/or reflective surfaces, planting trees, providing shade, and reducing hardscape.
- **Habitat Protection and Biodiversity:**
Project includes features that create, preserve, and/or enhance important habitat areas and biodiversity. Examples include preserving critical habitat areas, using native plants that attract pollinators, and creating a diversity of spaces that can be used as habitat for a diversity of animals.



Leveraging of Funds

Measure A encourages projects that leverage public and private funding from several specific types of benefit programs. Submitted budget should indicate secured funding sources and amounts that will be leveraged for the project. Public and private funding sources include, but are not limited to, those that address the following.

- Water conservation and supply; water quality improvements; flood risk management;
- Air quality improvements; climate pollution reduction or adaption; carbon sequestration; heat-island reduction; habitat protection and biodiversity;
- Public health; environmental justice.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Projects that provide accessibility, connecting rivers, mountains, and urban areas, especially to county parks, state parks, the national forest, the national recreation area(s), and the national monuments(s), and that link other canyons and regional and local parks through the county are encouraged. Efforts can take the form of new physical connections or improvements to existing ones. Quality of the connection, such as wayfinding, landscaping, and scale, will also be considered when scoring applications.

Timeliness and Urgency

Whether the initiation and completion of the project is needed and timely in that it builds on, complements, or moves toward implementing high priority acquisitions, connections, and/or habitat protection plans, or water conservation or protection improvement will be assessed for the application evaluation process.

