

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: See Below

DATE: November 24, 2025

Approved



Date:

12/3/25

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6

SUBJECT: Report on Request for Proposals for the Gardner Community Center Grant Program and Facility Management

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Accept the report on the Gardner Community Center Grant Program and Facility Management Request for Proposal process and results; and
- (b) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager or her designee to negotiate and execute a grant agreement, and all other necessary and/or ancillary documents, and any amendments thereto with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County for the City-owned Gardner Community Center in an amount not-to-exceed \$1,000,000 through June 30, 2029.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

The Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS) administered the Gardner Community Center Grant Program and Facility Management Request for Proposal (RFP) in May 2025. Based on staff's evaluation of proposals, PRNS recommends awarding the contract to Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County (Catholic Charities). The City Council's acceptance of the staff's report on the RFP and approval of key terms negotiated by staff, including ensuring and expanding community access, will authorize the City Manager, or her designee, to execute a grant agreement with Catholic Charities. This agreement will provide up to \$1,000,000 in grant funding over three years to deliver programs aligned with the Neighborhood Center Partner Program priorities, including Education and Digital Literacy, Economic and Stabilization Opportunities, Safe and Welcoming Neighborhoods, and Health and Wellness. Approval will ensure timely activation of Gardner Community Center programs, sustainable delivery of high-quality services tailored to local needs, compliance with the Downtown

West Development Agreement funding requirements, and alignment with the City of San José's (City) broader goals of equity, access, and community well-being.

BACKGROUND

On May 25, 2021, City Council approved the Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan, including a Development Agreement with Google. The Development Agreement includes requirements on how the Downtown West Project will deliver up to \$200,000,000 in community benefits, defined as investments that go beyond the City's baseline requirements to address the community's top priorities. The Development Agreement addresses City Council's and the community's top priorities as expressed through the extensive community engagement process conducted during 2018 to 2021. City Council's direction was to allocate \$1,000,000 to invest in programs at the Gardner Community Center to uplift individuals, support economic recovery, and build community among residents of the broader Diridon Station Area.

Originally, PRNS submitted a proposal for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 to activate and administer recreation and community-based programming out of Gardner Community Center for two years utilizing the Google funding. Ultimately, the Gardner Neighborhood Association, residents of the broader Diridon Station Area, and community stakeholders preferred the facility be activated by a local non-profit organization for three years. The Mayor's June Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 supported the new direction. As a result, PRNS launched the Gardner Community Center Grant Program and Facility Management RFP through the Neighborhood Center Partner Program in May 2025 to identify a provider to activate the Gardner Community Center.

ANALYSIS

In May 2025, PRNS released an RFP for the Gardner Community Center Grant Program and Facility Management. To ensure a robust list of viable agency candidates to choose from, PRNS conducted an extensive promotional outreach effort to inform in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese) and encouraged local non-profit agencies to apply. Examples of these efforts include:

- City Council newsletters in all 10 council districts;
- Media Advisory;
- PRNS social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) and the City's LinkedIn accounts;
- City Manager's Office Monthly Update;
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits networks;
- Nonprofits subscribed to WebGrants;

- Existing Neighborhood Center Partner Program providers and subcontractors; and
- EASTSIDE Magazine and their social media.

As such, 26 proposals were received by the RFP deadline. Pursuant to Section 7.1 of the RFP, 21 proposals met the minimum qualifications and advanced to the evaluation process. The proposals were evaluated according to the criteria set out in the request for proposals, and oral interviews were conducted with the eight highest-ranked agencies that met the 80-point minimum threshold. After conducting the oral interviews, Catholic Charities scored highest overall, receiving 89 out of 100 points and demonstrating strong performance across all evaluation criteria. Awarding the contract to Catholic Charities ensures timely activation of Gardner Community Center programs in alignment with Downtown West Development Agreement funding priorities, supporting immediate delivery of community programs, compliance with Development Agreement funding requirements, and alignment with City and community goals.

The evaluation followed these general steps/stages:

Evaluation Process: 21 proposals advanced to further evaluation and were scored in accordance with the criteria set forth in Section 9.2 of the RFP. Proposals were assessed on the following criteria: Mission and Vision, Program Design and Community Involvement, Outreach and Recruitment, Experience and Past Success, Proposed Budget, and Local and Small Business Participation.

Following the initial scoring, oral interviews were conducted with the eight highest-ranked agencies that met the 80-point minimum threshold. The top-scoring agency was further reviewed to ensure alignment with City priorities and the Downtown West Development Agreement funding requirements.

Final evaluation scores are as follows:

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Evaluation Criteria	Mission and Vision	Program Design and Community Involvement	Outreach and Recruitment	Experience and Past Success	Proposed Budget	Small Business	Local Business	Oral Interview	Total Overall Score
Score with Oral Interview	10	20	15	10	20	5	5	15	100
Agency									
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County	9	18	14	10	19	-	5	14	89
Healing Grove Health Center Foundation Inc	9	17	14	9	19	5	5	9	87
Prosperity Lab	9	19	13	9	17	5	5	8	85
Korean American Community Services, Inc	8	17	13	8	18	5	5	11	85
Local Color	7	17	13	8	15	5	5	9	80
The Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation, Inc.	8	17	12	8	16	5	5	7	79
Tech Exchange	8	18	13	9	16	5	-	9	78
Center for Training and Careers (DBA ConXion to Community)	8	18	14	9	13	-	5	9	78

The results of the initial evaluation process are summarized below:

Evaluation Criteria	Submittal Requirements	Minimum Qualifications	Advanced to Oral Interview
Score without Oral Interview	Pass/Fail	Pass/Fail	Pass/Fail
Agency			
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County	Pass	Pass	Pass
Center for Training and Careers (DBA ConXion to Community)	Pass	Pass	Pass
Healing Grove Health Center Foundation Inc	Pass	Pass	Pass
Korean American Community Services, Inc	Pass	Pass	Pass
Local Color	Pass	Pass	Pass
Prosperity Lab	Pass	Pass	Pass
Tech Exchange	Pass	Pass	Pass
The Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation, Inc.	Pass	Pass	Pass
Association of Tao Development	Pass	Pass	Fail
Healthier Kids Foundation Santa Clara County	Pass	Pass	Fail
Holistica Arts	Pass	Pass	Fail
Hunger at Home	Pass	Pass	Fail
Korean American Senior Citizens League of Santa Clara	Pass	Pass	Fail
MAGIC Dance Arts, Inc.	Pass	Pass	Fail
Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation	Pass	Pass	Fail
Open Doors to Future Possibilities	Pass	Pass	Fail
Our City Inc	Pass	Pass	Fail
Red Ladder Theatre Company	Pass	Pass	Fail
San José State University Research Foundation	Pass	Pass	Fail
Society of Heart's Delight	Pass	Pass	Fail
WELLSPRING K12	Pass	Pass	Fail
An Ton Meditation Center	Fail	Fail	N/A
Bay Area Cultural Connection	Fail	Fail	N/A
BeXstreme	Fail	Fail	N/A
Eritrean Community Center	Fail	Fail	N/A
V-Heart, Inc.	Fail	Fail	N/A

Local and Small Business Enterprise Preference: In accordance with [City of San José Municipal Code, Section 4.12.320](#), 10% of the total evaluation points were reserved for qualifying businesses pursuant to the City's Small and Local Business Preference program.

Protest: The City's Request for Proposal process included a 10-day protest period that began when the City issued the Notice of Intended Award on September 26, 2025. Two protests were submitted within the required 10-day period. A protest was received from Healing Grove Health Center on the basis that they believed components of Catholic Charities proposal did not meet minimum requirements and were therefore non-

responsive or materially deficient and that with unbiased scoring, they should have received higher scores in the RFP.

A second protest was also received from Prosperity Lab, on the basis that they believed that Catholic Charities submitted its proposal after the original deadline and should have been penalized or disqualified. Prosperity Lab further expressed concern regarding the time taken by the City to release interview and detailed scoring results.

The protests were carefully reviewed by a Deputy City Manager, acting as the appeal hearing officer. Both protests were rejected in full, and the agencies were notified of the City's decision on November 14, 2025. The protest letter responses are attached to this memorandum as Attachments A and B.

Award Recommendations: Based on these results, staff recommends award of contract to Catholic Charities as the highest-ranked proposer.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

No follow-up action with City Council is anticipated.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The available funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 over a three-year term will be funded by the General Fund. This funding, which includes personnel, marketing, supplies, and materials expenses, will support services such as operational systems, program design, and program delivery at the Gardner Community Center. The total cost of the three-year agreement will not exceed \$1,000,000, with annual payments to be negotiated with the agency.

BUDGET REFERENCE

The following table identifies the fund and appropriation to fund the contract recommended as part of this memorandum.

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Fund #	Appn. #	Appropriation Name	Total Appropriation	Amount for Contract	2025-2026 Adopted Operating Budget Page	Last Budget Action(Date, Ord. No.)
001	222A	Google Community Benefits – Economic Development	\$1,258,962	\$1,000,000	892	10/21/2025 31252

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the December 16, 2025 City Council meeting.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-003, Agreements/Contracts (New or Amended) resulting in no physical changes to the environment.

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PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/

Jon Cicirelli

Director, Parks, Recreation, and
Neighborhood Services Department

For questions, please contact Maria De Leon, Deputy Director, Recreation Division, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, at maria.deleon@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 795-3116.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Protest Response – Healing Grove

Attachment B – Protest Response – Prosperity Lab

November 14, 2025

VIA E-MAIL AND US MAIL ONLY

Noe Guzman
President, Healing Grove Sports
Healing Grove Health Center Foundation, Inc. (HGHC)
226 W Alma Ave Ste 10
San Jose, CA 95110
noe@healinggrove.org

SUBJECT: Gardner Community Center Grant Program and RFP Protest

Dear Mr. Guzman,

My name is Jennifer Schembri and I am a Deputy City Manager in the San José City Manager's Office. The City Manager designated me to review the appeals related to the Gardner Community Center Request for Proposal ("RFP"). This letter is to inform you that I have reviewed and evaluated your protest, dated October 5, 2025, entitled "Healing Grove Health Center Protest to Gardner RFP NOIA," as well as additional information supporting your protest submitted on October 26, 2025, and I am upholding City staff's recommendation to award the RFP to Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County (CCSCC).

On May 30, 2025, bids were opened for the Gardner Community Center Grant Program. After two extensions, the final application deadline was August 5, 2025. The evaluation period was from August 11, 2025, to August 22, 2025, oral interviews were conducted on September 9, 2025, and the Notice of Intent to Award was released on September 26, 2025. The Notice of Intent to Award recommended awarding a contract to CCSCC.

On October 5, 2025, Healing Grove Health Center Foundation, Inc. (HGHC) submitted a protest to the RFP, alleging the following:

1. The bid submitted by CCSCC envisions collecting program revenue but failed to complete the Revenue section of Form 7, and therefore, did not meet the minimum RFP requirements specified in RFP Section 2.3, Table 1, Item #2.
2. The CCSCC bid was materially non-responsive and/or materially deficient in its responses to the following sections of the RFP:
 - a. Attachment D, Section 2, Question 2a–b (Pricing Model)
 - b. RFP Section 2.3, Table 1, Item #3 (Plan for Supplemental Funding)
 - c. Attachment D, Section 4, Question 3 (Staffing Ratios)
 - d. Attachment D, Section 4, Question 4a (Participants Served)
3. An impartial analysis of the service table submitted by CCSCC in Attachment D, Section 2, Question 4 demonstrates that the CCSCC bid was materially deficient in

meeting the Agency Requirements specified in RFP Section 3.5, Table 5, under “Daily Center Operations” and “Facility Accessibility and Welcoming Environment.”

4. An impartial and unbiased scoring of HGHC’s proposal would result in a higher overall total score, in the following:
 - a. Program Design and Community Involvement
 - b. Outreach and Recruitment
 - c. Proposed Budget
 - d. The Objective vs. Subjective portion of the NOIA scoring table

On October 24, 2025, an informal meeting was held with representatives from HGHC, staff from the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS), two attorneys from the City Attorney’s Office, and myself as the appeal hearing officer. During this meeting, both HGHC and PRNS presented additional information. Following the meeting, both HGHC and PRNS also submitted supplemental documentation for consideration.

After a careful review, I have made the following determination:

HGHC’s protest is not supported by the administrative record. It is important to note that many of HGHC’s claims about CCSCC’s proposal allege that it failed to meet minimum qualifications and therefore should have been deemed non-responsive. However, the only criteria that would warrant an immediate determination of non-responsive are those listed in Table 1 of the RFP, titled “Minimum Qualifications.” CCSCC did not indicate any inability to meet these minimum qualifications. All other aspects outlined in the scope of services are factors to be evaluated during the scoring process, but they do not constitute grounds for automatic disqualification or a finding of non-responsiveness.

It is also important to note that the RFP requires proposers to disclose to the City all material information relevant to their submission throughout the process. Proposers had the opportunity to provide such information during the interview process, and the interviewers were obligated to consider it in their scoring. There is nothing improper in this procedure—if information is clarified during the interview that may not have been entirely clear in the RFP written submission, this would be factored into the overall rating.

Each of HGHC’s points is further addressed as follows:

1. The bid submitted by CCSCC envisions collecting program revenue but failed to complete the Revenue section of Form 7, and therefore, did not meet the minimum RFP requirements specified in RFP Section 2.3, Table 1, Item #2.

As noted above, this does not constitute a minimum qualification that would result in immediate disqualification for non-responsiveness. Further, the form itself states: “Using the form below as a guide or provide a similar worksheet.” Nowhere on the document does it indicate that all information on the example form must be provided.

In addition, I have reviewed the CCSCC response to this question. They did submit a completed Form 7 cost proposal, that included Operator Expenses and Total Expenses. The Operator Expenses was detailed in that it included costs for personnel, program supplies, food and

refreshments, transportation, staff training, contracted services, IT and communications, AWARDS database, indirect personnel and operating/non-personnel costs. Their written response to this question further details the items that are included in each of these categories. I find that CCSCC sufficiently answered this question.

2. The CCSCC bid was materially non-responsive and/or materially deficient in its responses to the following sections of the RFP:

- a. Attachment D, Section 2, Question 2a–b (Pricing Model)

As noted above, this does not constitute a minimum qualification that would result in immediate disqualification for non-responsiveness. Further, CCSCC responded to this question by stating that any fees collected would be based on an ability to pay and that financial accessibility would be ensured through free and low-cost programs, prioritizing services for low-income residents in the Gardner neighborhood. CCSCC further stated that fees would follow a sliding scale based on ability to pay and that CCSCC would actively seek grant funding, sponsorships, and community partnerships to subsidize program costs.

In addition, during the oral interview process, all interviewees were asked the following question:

The City of San Jose will be providing approximately 20% of the total contract value to assist with initial costs. Please provide details on how your organization will financially support the implementation of your proposed programming and what financial tracking systems will you use to monitor grant funds.

CCSCC's response to this question would have also been taken into account and could have potentially impacted the oral interview scoring. Even if CCSCC's written response were broader in scope, as argued by HGHC, when considered in conjunction with other parts of the submission, such as the interview portion, City staff could determine that there was nevertheless adequate information to evaluate and weigh in favor of CCSCC.

- b. RFP Section 2.3 Table 1, Item #3 (Plan for Supplemental Funding)

Again, this does not constitute a minimum qualification that would result in immediate disqualification for non-responsiveness. Further, this information was requested only in the event that the initial budget was insufficient to meet the needs of the partnership. However, the budget submitted by CCSCC was within the \$1,000,000 grant award, and therefore, there was no need to provide a plan for supplemental funding.

- c. Attachment D, Section 4, Question 3 (Staffing Ratios)

HGHC alleges that the CCSCC application failed to provide staff ratios or staff qualifications in response to RFP Attachment D, Narrative Section 4, Question 3. HGHC acknowledges that the RFP does not require a specific staff-to-participant ratio, but contends that the narrative question requires this information and that CCSCC's omission renders its proposal materially non-responsive.

Again, this does not constitute a minimum qualification that would result in immediate disqualification. Moreover, this is only one question among multiple questions that are evaluated together. Points are not rewarded for each item requested—rather, the assessment is based on the overall quality of the response, taking all answers into consideration. After reviewing both CCSCC's and HGHC's response to this question, I identified deficiencies in each that were taken into account when determining the overall rating. For example, in HGHC's response to this question, they referenced a staffing model with hours and generally indicated that staff would be fully bilingual, have a high school degree, have experience serving the Garner/Washington/Alma communities, and be certified case managers. HGHC also noted staffing ratios specific to sports and youth programs, noting that one staff member is sufficient for adult programs. However, it is important to note that although HGHC acknowledged the request for staff qualifications, its response did not identify the specific staff members who would be involved or specify their education levels and certifications.

In contrast, CCSCC's response offered detailed information about key team members, including their names and experience. CCSCC also identified the on-site direct service staff and outlined their best practices. Overall, CCSCC's response was more comprehensive in some areas, while HGHC's was stronger in others, which influenced the final scoring of both submissions.

d. Attachment D, Section 4, Question 4a (Participants Served)

HGHC contends that CCSCC's response to this question only superficially describes several potential measures of success, including participant demographics, referral follow-ups, and survey results. It further asserts that CCSCC's bid does not provide any quantitative targets for duplicated or unduplicated participants served, nor does it specify what data would be collected or analyzed to assess participant satisfaction through surveys. Additionally, HGHC notes that CCSCC referenced a dashboard that would not be available to the public, raising concerns about how the public would be able to hold CCSCC accountable.

In reviewing the RFP, the question at issue is as follows:

What methods will your agency utilize to track and evaluate the following service deliverables:

- a. Participants served and level of services provided; and*
- b. The impact of the proposed services.*

Upon review of this question, it appears that the information HGHC claims CCSCC failed to include was not actually requested in the RFP. For example, HGHC asserts that CCSCC's submission was deficient because it did not include quantitative targets for participants. However, based on the RFP, the question asked for the *method* that would be used to track and evaluate service deliverables—not for specific numerical targets. Further, nothing in the question suggests that the City was requesting a way for the public to evaluate the services. It is reasonable to assume that contract evaluation would be conducted by the City itself. Therefore, HGHC's assertion that CCSCC's application is deficient on these grounds is not supported by a plain reading of the question or the contract evaluation process.

Upon review of CCSCC's RFP response, I find its answer to be sufficient and directly responsive to what was asked. CCSCC described a client information database that they currently use to track

the types of information specified in the RFP question. They also discussed the use of surveys and focus groups to gather community feedback. The absence of quantitative targets is not relevant, as the RFP question did not request this information.

3. An impartial analysis of the service table submitted by CCSCC in Attachment D, Section 2, Question 4 demonstrates that the CCSCC bid was materially deficient in meeting the Agency Requirements specified in RFP Section 3.5, Table 5, under “Daily Center Operations” and “Facility Accessibility and Welcoming Environment.”

Again, this does not constitute a minimum qualification that would result in immediate disqualification. Further, this is one question within an overall set of questions that are evaluated together as part of the Program Design and Community Involvement Section of the RFP. Points are not rewarded for each item requested—rather, the assessment is based on the overall quality of the response, taking all answers into consideration.

The Program Design and Community Involvement Section of the RFP included the following questions (summarized):

1. What services is the agency proposing?
2. How will the agency and proposed services maximize community access to the center?
3. In what other ways can the agency support both the Gardner community and the Gardner Neighborhood Association?
4. Describe the proposed program schedule.

The total program hours were addressed under Question #4, but this was only one of several requests included in this section, which also asked for:

1. Activity name
2. GCC priority services
3. Detailed program description
4. Activity Days and Times
5. Age Group
6. Activity/Program Fee

Respondents were then asked to provide weekly activity schedule, the duration of the program, and the total program hours, as well as describe any type of scholarship or reduced-fee programs and other ways they propose to support the Gardner community.

In my review of the CCSCC submission, I find that CCSCC provided a sufficient response to the information requested through the service table beginning on page 7 of their RFP Response, Attachment D. The table included the Activity Name, the Priority Area, a Program Description, Days and Times, Age Group, and Duration/Cycle Type. Regarding the activity or program fee, CCSCC stated in the written portion of its response that “services will be offered free of charge or on a sliding scale, depending on the program.” While there was limited specificity on one item, this would not significantly impact the rating with an overall point assignment of 20 points under this Section, especially when there are multiple pieces of information requested under this one

question. Based on CCSCC's responses to the other components of this question, there is no basis to conclude that the assigned ratings were incorrect.

4. An impartial and unbiased scoring of HGHC's proposal would result in a higher overall total score.

HGHC asserts that the scoring for Program Design & Community Involvement, Outreach and Recruitment, Proposed Budget, and the objective versus subjective portion of the NOIA scoring table was inappropriately scored, showing bias.

There is no evidence to support that there was partial or biased scoring of the HGHC's proposal in any of these categories. In each of these sections, CCSCC provided substantive responses, and it appears HGHC is comparing their proposal to CCSCC's, rather than looking at the overall responsiveness of the proposal.

For example, CCSCC provided answers to all requested information under program design and community involvement other than specificity on direct service hours, which is discussed above. The scoring is based on responsiveness and as noted above, answers are part of a multi-part question within a series of four overall questions. HGHC's contention that they should have scored five times higher in this category does not take this into consideration.

As another example, HGHC took issue with the number of reference letters from Gardner Community members that were submitted. I do not see anywhere in the RFP where reference letters are required—only reference contact forms are required—let alone that they were required to be from Gardner Community members. The MQs state, *"References, letters, and other necessary evidence, supporting previous experience of running similar programs, at similar sized facilities, to the programs described in their proposals must be submitted at the time of application."* In other words, should an applicant choose to submit such supporting documents, they must do so at the time of application submission. Further, this does not state the number of reference letters requested or that they needed to be from Gardner Community members.

As another example, HGHC took issue with CCSCC's response under Staffing Diversity. The question asked was: "How will you ensure that the proposed staffing levels will match the ethnic diversity of the greater Gardner neighborhood?" HGHC contends that CCSCC did not provide any data on either its staff or the Gardner community. However, that was not the focus of the question. The question asked how CCSCC would *ensure* diversity and CCSCC's response included several relevant measures, such as intentionally recruiting and hiring individuals who share the cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and languages of the client populations; prioritizing inclusion of individuals with lived experience into program staffing; and noting that its proposed staff have extensive experience working with the diverse populations of Santa Clara County and in the Gardner area. CCSCC's response also states that a majority of its staff are bilingual and are trained in trauma informed care and culturally competent practices. I find this response sufficient based on the question asked. HGHC appears to be seeking information that was not requested and is therefore outside the scope of the question.

Regarding the final claim concerning the objective versus subjective portion of the NOIA scoring table, there were multiple raters on the RFP. All received the same scoring criteria and instruction

as provided in PRNS's response to the protest. Further, PRNS provided evidence that each applicant was asked the same five questions in the interview process. HGHC provides no evidence or information to support that the ratings for the oral interview, where CCSCC was given 14 points and HGHC was given 9 points, were inappropriate or not a correct assessment of the oral interview. The only support HGHC provides for its claim of bias is that it provided a detailed response to the 5 oral interview questions, along with detailed slides that presented an overview of the application. However, HGHC would have no knowledge of how CCSC provided information or answered the same questions during the interview.

For these reasons, I am upholding staff's recommendation to award the RFP to Catholic Charities. You may appeal this decision to the San Jose City Council by filing a written appeal with the City Clerk by end of day (Pacific Time) November 24, 2025, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 4.12.460. The City Council date for this item is not yet set but we will inform you of the date once it is confirmed.

Thank you,



Jennifer Schembri
Deputy City Manager

November 14, 2025

VIA E-MAIL AND US MAIL ONLY

Mimi Hernandez
Chief Executive Officer
Prosperity Lab
701 Vine Street
San José, CA 95110
mimi@prosperitylab.org

Dear Ms. Hernandez,

My name is Jennifer Schembri and I am a Deputy City Manager in the San José City Manager's Office. The City Manager designated me to review the appeals related to the Gardener Community Center Request for Proposal ("RFP"). This letter is to inform you that I have reviewed and evaluated your email dated October 5, 2025, entitled "Gardner CC Grant Program and RFP-Protest," and I am upholding staff's recommendation to award the RFP to Catholic Charities.

On October 5, 2025, Prosperity Lab submitted a protest requesting that the City disclose the names of applicants who submitted their bids after the July 22, 2025 deadline; that those applicants receive a significant point deduction or be disqualified; and that the decision to issue a second extension after the July 22, 2025 deadline be referred to the Rules Committee. The protest also raises concerns about the length of time it took to release interview scores and detailed scoring, alleging that the disclosure took well over two weeks.

The protest ultimately challenges the intent to award the RFP to Catholic Charities, as it submitted its bid after July 22, 2025. After a careful review, I have made the following determination:

1. The City's deadline extensions were due to technical issues of the WebGrants system that may impact the ability to submit bids by the deadline.

On May 30, 2025, bids were opened for the Gardner Community Center Grant Program. The initial deadline for questions and answers was June 20, 2025. During this period, WebGrants conducted a system upgrade that caused technical issues impacting submissions. As a result, the deadline for questions and answers was extended to July 11, 2025, and the application deadline was extended to July 22, 2025. Due to additional issues with WebGrants causing errors for users that may have impacted the submission of bids, the final application deadline was extended to August 5, 2025. The City's Information Technology Department confirmed with WebGrants that, during this period, there were eight issues affecting the system.

2. The timeline for scoring and the release of the intent to award falls within a normal timeframe. Further, there is no requirement that the intent to award, along with detailed scoring, be released within a specific period.

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The final application deadline was August 5, 2025, and the evaluation period ran from August 11, 2025, to August 22, 2025. Oral interviews were conducted on September 9, 2025, with scores received on September 11, 2025, and the notice of intent to award released on September 26, 2025. This falls within the normal RFP timeframes and does not indicate any impropriety in the process.

For these reasons, I am upholding staff's recommendation to award the RFP to Catholic Charities. You may appeal this decision to the San José City Council by filing a written appeal with the City Clerk by end of day (Pacific Time) November 24, 2025, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 4.12.460. The City Council date for this item is not yet set but we will inform you of the date once it is confirmed.

Thank you,



Jennifer Schembri

Deputy City Manager