


CITY COUNCIL ACTION REQUEST			
Department(s): Environmental Services	CEQA: Not a Project, File No. PP17-007, Grant	Coordination: City Attorney’s Office and City Manager’s Budget Office	Dept. Approval: /s/ Kerrie Romanow
Council District(s): Districts 3, 4 & 5	Application with no commitment or obligation to enter to an agreement at the time of application		CMO Approval:  11/18/21
SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR CALIFORNIA STATE PARK’S OUTDOOR EQUITY GRANTS PROGRAM FOR INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY WATERSHED EDUCATION			
RECOMMENDATION:			
<p>Adopt a resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approving the Environmental Services Department’s application to the California Department of Parks and Recreation’s Outdoor Equity Grants Program for Independence High School and the surrounding community to provide opportunities for members of the community and students to learn about and explore their local waterways, build a relationship with nature, foster a sense of environmental stewardship, and provide career development skills for the students; and b) Authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute documents necessary to accept the grant, if awarded. 			
BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:			
<p>The City of San José’s Environmental Services Department (ESD) provided watershed education called Biologist in the Classroom that empowered high school students to teach watershed protection to grade school students. The program was a collaboration between the City and the students and teachers at Independence High School, Summerdale Elementary, and St. John Vianney Catholic School. The City provided curriculum, training, and outreach materials. As part of ESD’s efforts to reduce General Fund expenditures in FY 21-22, this program was eliminated which prevented the City from providing additional environmental outreach to school-age children, which is in support of requirements under the City’s Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit.</p> <p>ESD is seeking grant funding from the State of California’s Outdoor Equity Grants Program to restart this program with a new emphasis on outdoor activities. The proposed program will meet the grant’s goal to provide youth with experience that could be useful for future employment resumes or college admissions. High school students will develop an understanding of a watershed-focused curriculum and implement a training opportunity for high schoolers to impart the curriculum to elementary school students. In addition, ESD plans to collaborate with Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful to enhance the outdoor involvement with these students. Outdoor activities includes water quality testing, Bioblitz’s, and trash cleanups. While there will be considerable focus on engaging students with their local outdoor areas, ESD will provide participants field trips to the upper portions of the Coyote or Penitencia Watershed and Alviso Slough. This helps reinforce their understanding of watersheds and how their local environmental stewardship will have a broader impact.</p> <p>The grant program requests that organizations submit applications for Community Home Bases, which are central gathering places in an underserved community that needs access to outdoor programs. Due to staff capacity to meet City’s Municipal Regional Stormwater permit needs while achieving City’s equity goals, ESD identified one location, Independence High School, as a Community Home Base. This location was selected based on an evaluation of the State of California’s Outdoor Equity Program Tool, which identified</p>			

additional factors (1) areas with the highest rate of free or reduced-priced school meals, (2) the highest rate of English learners in public schools, (3) the highest number of people living in poverty, and (4) the lowest per capita income. If awarded, the grant-funded program requires that a majority of residents participating come from the Community Home Base area within a half mile radius. The proposed program is designed to reach approximately 1,080 residents for the Community Home Base per year over four years, totaling 4,320 residents served.

The Outdoor Equity Grant Program applications require a City Council resolution authorizing each of the applications. The resolution is to confirm that the governing body is aware of all terms in the contract and provides confirmation that, if selected the applicant has the funding needed to complete the proposed outdoor program (but will be fully reimbursed through the grant) if the grant is awarded. Grant awards will be announced in spring of 2022. If the City is selected, the funds will be available after Council approval and California's Office of Grants and Local Services contract is signed. Funding requested will be available on an annual basis until spring 2026, or four years after contract signature.

Climate Smart San José: The recommendation in this memo aligns with one or more Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

Commission Recommendation/Input: No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

COST AND FUNDING SOURCE:

If this application is awarded, total program costs over the four-year term will be \$180,327. The grant does not require any matching funds; if awarded, the grant would cover 100% of the cost and all program management and staff time expenses would be reimbursed. Final budget recommendation for allocation of the grant award will be submitted as part of the regular budget process.

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT: Rajani Nair, Deputy Director – Rajani.nair@sanjoseca.gov 408-799-7462