

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

June 18, 2020

Barrio Logan Climate Resiliency Community Project

Project No. 20-022-01

Project Managers: Ella McDougall and Emely Lopez

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$254,530 to the Environmental Health Coalition to increase climate resiliency in the Barrio Logan community by developing a proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update and preparing a preliminary plan for the Boston Linear Park in San Diego, CA.

LOCATION: Barrio Logan, San Diego, CA

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Climate Ready Program

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Photos](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31113 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed two hundred fifty-four thousand five hundred and thirty dollars (\$254,530) to the Environmental Health Coalition (“grantee”) to increase climate resiliency in the Barrio Logan community of San Diego, CA through development of a proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update and preparation of a preliminary plan for the Boston Linear Park.

Prior to the commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.

2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgment of Conservancy's funding.

The grantee shall comply with all applicable requirements associated with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), including all requirements set forth in the Air Resources Board's GGRF Funding Guidelines."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 3, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Section 31113, regarding addressing climate change and potential climate change impacts.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The nonprofit organization proposed under this authorization is organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize the disbursement of up to \$254,530 to the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) to fund the Barrio Logan Climate Resiliency Community project, a planning project consisting of preparation of two plans that address climate change impacts and bolster adaptation planning efforts in Barrio Logan, a severely disadvantaged community (Exhibits 1). EHC will work with the City of San Diego (the City) to develop the plans, which will reduce climate change impacts and provide training, support, and resources in the Barrio Logan community. The two plans are a proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update and a preliminary plan for the Boston Avenue Linear Park. EHC will ensure that community members understand and are involved in the preparation of these plans.

Proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update

EHC will lead and organize critical stakeholders to create a proposed update to the 1978 Barrio Logan Community Plan, San Diego's oldest and most outdated community plan. In 2013, the City updated and adopted the Barrio Logan Community Plan that addressed zoning between the residential and industrial facilities. However, in 2014, the plan's updates were subsequently overturned by the referendum: resolution No.308445. This referendum was placed on the ballot to approve or deny a comprehensive update to the Barrio Logan Community Plan, and the County of San Diego voted to deny the new Plan.

In early 2018, the City began working with the Barrio Logan community, including EHC, to

revitalize the efforts of updating the plan. In this project, EHC will partner with the City, community groups, and parks committees to support the proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update. The Plan Update will include recommendations for changes to the zoning map with considerations for sea-level rise and climate adaptation in the portside area. The Plan will also include a conservation chapter that includes recommendations regarding energy efficiency, climate adaptation, mobility, urban design, public facilities, services and safety, and recreation. Residents' input and feedback will be integrated into the creation of the proposed plan. EHC will engage the community and include a leadership training program called Salud Ambiental Líderes Tomando Acción (SALTA). SALTA provides education for the community through a Community Action Team that will hold approximately five or more public workshops during the development of the proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update. The final product will be a proposed Barrio Logan Community Plan Update for the City's consideration to adopt.

Boston Avenue Linear Park

EHC will also partner with the City to develop a preliminary plan for new park space in the Barrio Logan community that increases the community's tree canopy and carbon sequestration efforts. The proposed park is located on CalTrans owned property and is currently listed as excess property eligible for transfer or relinquishment. The City, EHC, and Assembly member Todd Gloria's office are in discussions on how to proceed with transferring all parcels to the City. Once secured, EHC will hire a qualified contractor to develop preliminary park designs. Additionally, EHC will extend its leadership training program, SALTA, for resident leaders to help engage the community in green space planning and hold two subsequent public workshops. EHC, resident leaders, and partner groups will develop a community vision for the proposed Boston Avenue Linear Park. The vision will be strategized through community workshops, engagement of decision-makers, and involvement in park establishment and expansion processes. This urban greening planning project seeks to increase tree canopy, which is known to provide shade and cooling during the increasingly frequent heatwaves and aid in filtering community air.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The Barrio Logan community is positioned between downtown San Diego to the north, Interstate 5 to the east, as well as the Unified Port of San Diego and United States Naval Base San Diego along San Diego Bay to the west, and National City to the south. Barrio Logan is in the Local Coastal Zone and subject to the California Coastal Act, which is implemented by the Barrio Logan Local Coastal Program. The Barrio Logan waterfront remains part of the city's core industrial area and contains a significant amount of the City's remaining industrial land.

The project planning area is within the Chollas Creek watershed (See Exhibit 1). Barrio Logan spans about 1,000 acres along San Diego Bay, west of Interstate 5 and south of downtown San Diego. Approximately 55,000 residents live within this community. Barrio Logan is a waterfront neighborhood with multiple land uses, including industrial facilities, recycling centers, residential homes, and schools, and is in proximity to the San Diego port and major highways

(the I-5 and 1-15 freeways).

The potential Boston Avenue Linear Park is situated on the north side of Boston Avenue. There are three parcels, totaling approximately three acres that can be potentially converted to park space. Caltrans owns these parcels, and they are parallel to the I5 freeway, between 29th Street on the west and Chollas Creek on the east. One parcel is a vacant lot, the others are on Caltrans right-of-way and covered with shrubs, ground cover, and trees. The area adjacent to the park is the only completely residential zoned area in Barrio Logan, a community that has long desired a greenspace to serve its population.

The Barrio Logan is the most underserved and climate-vulnerable community that has less than half of the green space recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association, and approximately half of the City of San Diego's average tree canopy. Frequent heat waves are already a reality for the community, and they can be a severe health risk as the vast majority of Barrio Logan homes do not have air conditioning or the infrastructure and insulation in their homes to withstand high temperatures. With 14% of Barrio Logan residents being over the age of 60, heatwaves can be extremely dangerous for this vulnerable population.

Barrio Logan ranks highest in San Diego County for diesel particulate pollution and overall pollution burden. As a result, residents are exposed to chemicals that increase their risk of asthma, skin irritations, cancer, and other ailments. The community's rates of asthma-related hospital visits are higher than 96% of census tracts throughout the state. Furthermore, Barrio Logan residents are in the 99th percentile for poverty and are classified as a severely disadvantaged community according to the CalEnviroScreen tool.

The Coastal Conservancy performed an analysis to identify specific communities that are vulnerable to sea-level rise and categorized as disadvantaged based on CalEnviroScreen. Barrio Logan was one of the communities identified through that analysis.

GRANTEE QUALIFICATIONS:

The Environmental Health Coalition is a 40-year-old environmental justice organization that works to better the lives of the residents in underserved areas of San Diego, especially Barrio Logan. EHC undertakes projects that confront the unjust consequences of toxic pollution, discriminatory land use, and unstable energy policies in this area. EHC is working on several initiatives to address sea-level rise, climate adaptation, energy justice, and sustainable transportation.

EHC has worked in the Barrio Logan area since the 1980s and has deep relationships with both community residents and partners. EHC works with an active 17-member Community Planning Group and hosts monthly Community Action Team meetings. EHC was one of the key stakeholders in the 2013 Barrio Logan Community Plan Update and hosted dozens of community workshops and meetings to secure resident feedback during that process. EHC and the City of San Diego will continue to strengthen this relationship by working closely to create a proposed Community Plan Update. In 2017, EHC also led the community engagement process for the development of Paradise Creek Park. EHC staff organized tours of County park spaces for resident leaders and hosted multiple public input sessions for the park design. Almost all of

the residents' priorities were integrated into the final design. EHC will reach out to a broad array of Barrio Logan stakeholders and incorporate their feedback to avoid opposition like that which arose from the 2013 Barrio Logan Plan Update.

EHC has over 40 years of experience managing grants from federal, state, and local government and private foundations. All closed grants have been satisfactorily completed, and all reporting requirements were met adequately and in a timely fashion. Tracking of grant completion is overseen by EHC's Development Director in close partnership with the Executive Director, Finance Director, and campaign directors.

PROJECT HISTORY:

The Conservancy's Climate Ready Program encourages local governments and non-governmental organizations to prepare for a changing climate by advancing planning and implementation of on-the-ground actions that reduce GHG emissions, sequester carbon, or lessen the future impacts of climate change on California's coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. In December 2019, four projects were selected to receive funding for the sixth round of Climate Ready grants. Only 29% of these projects were located in or directly benefited disadvantaged communities, falling short of the Conservancy's goal of 35%.

In coordination with staff at the California Air Resources Board, Conservancy staff worked to proactively identify a project for this funding that would benefit disadvantaged communities highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and sea-level rise. The Coastal Conservancy performed an analysis to find specific regions would be most suitable to receive these funds based on four variables: areas most likely to be impacted by worst-case scenario (H++) for sea-level rise, a ranking of disadvantaged communities based on CalEnviroScreen, areas without past federal or state funding for climate projects, and communities that have the capacity for carrying out climate projects. Based on this list, the Conservancy reached out to several communities, including Antioch, Pittsburg, and National City, to identify potential projects. Through this research, EHC's project in Barrio Logan emerged as the best fitting project based on its capacity, experience working with Barrio Logan, and its pre-existing climate related-initiatives.

In 1978, the Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan was adopted. In September 2013, after a five-year effort among stakeholders, the City Council of San Diego adopted a community plan update that zoned heavy industry away from homes and schools, created a buffer zone to house office buildings and parking for workers, and established permanent affordable housing for residents. In 2014, the updated plan was repealed by a referendum vote. As a result, the 1978 plan is still in effect. Since the repeal, EHC and residents have worked with the City of San Diego to revisit the plan to protect the health of Barrio Logan families. The City is now convening a group of stakeholders to develop a new community plan for the Barrio Logan area, and ECH will support the City with this planning effort. This grant will support community engagement in that planning process.

The Boston Avenue Park space is highlighted as a potential location to develop an urban green park in the 1978 Barrio Logan Community Plan. The 2013 Community Plan Update also highlights the area as a potential designated urban park space with a connection to Chollas Creek. This urban park space would be a great addition as it is the few remaining parcels in

residential zoning.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$254,530
California Strategic Growth Council (pending)	\$51,362.67
General Support Funders (Secured)	\$52,320
Project Total	\$358,212.67

This project is composed of two components that total to \$358,212.67; approximately a third of the funding will support the proposed Community Plan Update, and approximately two-thirds will support the planning and design for the Boston Avenue Linear Park. EHC’s Barrio Logan Community Action Team (CAT) volunteers will volunteer their time to advance project activities monthly. CAT will coordinate project workshops and meetings with decision-makers. These leaders have graduated from EHC’s SALTA program and have years of experience engaging with community members. The total value of their expected in-kind services for this project is \$17,280. This value is calculated as two hours monthly for 36 months at \$16/hour for 15 people.

The proposed source of funding for this grant is a 2018 appropriation of \$3 million¹ of GGRF funds for the Climate Ready Program. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Investment Plan and Communities Revitalization Act (Health and Safety Code (HSC) Sections 39710 – 39723) requires that GGRF funds be used to (1) facilitate the achievement of reductions of GHG emissions consistent with the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (HSC Sections 38500 *et seq*), and (2) to the extent feasible, achieve other co-benefits, such as maximizing economic, environmental and public health benefits and directing investment to disadvantaged communities (HSC 39712(b)). The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 sets forth certain GGRF funding priorities (HSC Section 38590.1).

The project is consistent with the use of GGRF because the Boston Ave Linear Park facilitates the reduction of GHG emissions associated with land, natural resource conservation, and management (HSC Section 39712(c)(3)). The Barrio Logan Community Plan Update project component is also consistent with GGRF funding priorities by planning climate adaptation and sea-level rise strategies (HSC Section 38590.1(a)(6)). It will lessen the effects of climate change on the state’s communities, economy, and environment (HSC Section 39172(b)(6)). It also supports programs implemented by a nonprofit organization coordinating with a local

¹ \$3M appropriation for the Climate Ready Program, with 5% for administrative costs.

government (HSC Section 39712(c)(6)). It supports the research, development, and deployment of innovative measures and practices (HSC Section 39172(c)(7)).

GGRF Investment Plan

Pursuant to HSC Section 39716, this project, as a supplemental grant to the sixth round of Climate Ready grants, is consistent with the Third GGRF Investment Plan: Fiscal Years 2019-2022 (Investment Plan), which sets GGRF's funding goals. The current Investment Plan prioritizes GGRF funding for natural resources, sustainable agricultural practices, urban greening, climate adaptation and resiliency, and climate research (Investment Plan, pgs. 19-25). Pursuant to the Investment Plan, this project is also consistent with the state's climate goals, which include improving equity, achieving environmental justice, supporting capacity building, and increasing community engagement (Investment Plan, pgs. 4-13).

GGRF Funding Guidelines

CARB is directed by the state legislature to administer the GGRF funds and to develop funding guidelines to implement the GGRF statutory regime (HSC Section 39715). Consistent with the CARB 2018 Funding Guidelines, this round of Climate Ready grants meets the following required guiding principles for GGRF programs:

- Facilitate GHG emission reductions and further the purposes of AB 32 and related statutes
- Target investments in and benefiting priority populations, with a focus on maximizing disadvantaged community benefits
- Maximize economic, environmental, and public health co-benefits to the State
- Foster job creation and job training, wherever possible
- Avoid substantial potential burdens to disadvantaged communities and low-income communities
- Ensure transparency and accountability and provide public access to program information

This project will address the issue of greenhouse gases by advocating for and supporting a Community Plan Update with emphasis on habitat restoration, green urban space, and conservation. These elements support greenhouse gas sequestration in a community heavily burdened by high levels of air pollution emitted by nearby highway corridors and industry. The planning and design of the Boston Avenue Linear Park will add greenery to the community, absorbing carbon and toxic air emissions, and encouraging residents to recreate in a park within walking and biking distance to their neighborhood. This will reduce automobile use and traffic, further reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Consistent with the Funding Guidelines, this round of Climate ready grants also meets the following recommended guiding principles for GGRF programs:

- Encourage projects that contribute to other State climate goals
- Coordinate investments and leverage funds where possible to provide multiple benefits and to maximize benefits
- The Boston Ave Linear Park facilitates the reduction of GHG emissions associated with land, natural resource conservation, and management.
- The Barrio Logan Community Plan Update project component is also consistent with GGRF funding priorities by planning climate adaptation and sea-level rise strategies

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The recommended project would be undertaken pursuant to Section 31113 of Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, which authorizes the Conservancy to address the impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy's jurisdiction (Section 31113(a)). This community is within the coastal zone and subject to a coastal plan adopted in 2019.

Pursuant to Section 31113(b), the Conservancy is authorized to award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to undertake projects that include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and addressing extreme weather events, sea-level rise, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. Consistent with this section, the proposed authorization is to grant funds to a nonprofit organization to undertake the project described in the "Project Summary" section, which maximizes public benefits by facilitating capacity for climate resiliency planning in a disadvantaged community through the planning and design of urban green space, and reducing coastal hazards imposed by sea-level rise.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective C**, which seeks to design park space and natural play spaces, to increase and enhance coastal recreational opportunities and enable people to enjoy natural, cultural, and historical resources, the proposed project will develop a plan for park space within the coastal zone of CA.

Consistent with **Goal 8, Objective B**, which seeks to plan and design adaptation plans to increase resilience to sea-level rise and other climate change impacts, the proposed project will incorporate climate change and sea-level rise adaptation into the Barrio Logan Community Action Plan Update.

Consistent with **Goal 16, Objective A**, which seeks to prioritize projects for funding that are located in disadvantaged communities or directly benefit disadvantaged communities, the proposed project will directly benefit a disadvantaged community.

Consistent with **Goal 16, Objective B**, which seeks to increase the resilience to climate change

impacts of communities along the coast of California that lack capacity due to systemic inequities, the proposed projects will contribute to this goal by strengthening community planning capacity for climate resilience in a severely disadvantaged community.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:**
 - a. This project is consistent with the 2018 Update to the *Safeguarding California Plan* (California Natural Resources Agency), which seeks to "actively engage, educate, learn from, and partner with communities to enable early, continuous, and meaningful participation in adaptation initiatives." (Goal 1, p. 33) and to "support planning and adaptation to reduce hazards and to increase the resilience of coastal communities, infrastructure, development, and other resources" (O-1, p. 172).
 - b. The proposed project is also consistent with the 2015 *A Strategy for California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* (Governor's Office of Planning and Research), which seeks to "prioritize GHG emission reduction actions that provide climate resilience benefits, especially in the natural resource sector" (p.26).
4. **Support of the public:** As indicated by the Project Letters provided in Exhibit 3, the proposed project and its components are supported by elected officials, community and nonprofit organizations, and local agencies.
5. **Location:** This planning project is in a severely disadvantaged community and is within the coastal zone, South Coast region.
6. **Need:** Without Conservancy funding, the proposed project would either not proceed or would have to be significantly reduced in scope.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed planning project will potentially improve climate resiliency and planning efforts for a low-lying San Diego neighborhood with little to no climate planning work to date. The project will incorporate climate adaptation and sea-level rise planning, boosting resilience for the San Diego Bay, surrounding communities, and the entire San Diego Region. Coastal resilience planning is not about singular planning initiatives, but a complete network of local plans. Barrio Logan's Community Plan Update

proposal will help fulfill this goal, adding to the overall coastal resilience of California and the region's coastal economy.

The project site location is a historically underserved and severely disadvantaged community impacted by high levels of toxic pollution and climate impacts such as high heat. Enabling a local community to respond to climate change impacts will be a model for other disadvantaged coastal communities in California. This empowerment will also be evident in the creation of an urban green space, which will increase the region's ability to deal with climate change impacts, improving the livelihoods of locals, and attracting new visitors. This green space improvement will trickle into economic growth, bolstering the regional economy. For these regions, funding this local project will bring benefits to the San Diego and southern California regions and beyond.

- 8. Sea-level rise vulnerability:** The project will incorporate sea-level rise strategies as a part of the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update proposal. Upper limit sea-level rise projections for the City of San Diego (Barrio Logan is included in the City's jurisdiction) are 0.25 m by 2030, 0.75 m by 2050, and 2.0 m by 2100 (City of San Diego State Lands Sea-level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, July 2019). Specifically, in the Barrio Logan area, 10 feet of projected sea-level rise and storm surge will inundate nearly all waterfront industry and property up to Belk Street, including Cesar Chavez park, a popular and well-used green space in Barrio Logan. Sea-level rise vulnerability will continue to put Barrio Logan's residents and assets at risk unless they are planned for proactively. This project will lay the groundwork for this need.

Additional Criteria

- 9. Urgency:** The longer we wait to adapt to climate change, the higher the future costs and losses will be (California's Coast and Ocean Summary Report, Fourth Climate Change Assessment, 2018). Communities must begin planning for sea-level rise and climate change impacts such as high heat now so that they are prepared to combat these issues when they become a chronic reality.
- 10. Resolution of more than one issue:** This project contains two dove-tailed project components to combat the impacts of climate change. Supporting the creation of the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update proposal is a proactive way to plan o recommend climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the Boston Avenue Park will reduce the public health impacts on the community. By funding this project, both climate planning and immediate action for mitigating climate change impacts will be undertaken.
- 11. Readiness:** The project described above in the "Project Summary" section is ready to implement. The Boston Avenue Park project component has begun with cooperation from local City and elected officials. Design is expected to occur during 2021. The Barrio Logan Community Plan Update proposal is already underway within the community due to the work from the 2013 Community Plan Update effort.
- 12. Cooperation:** This project will foster collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including

CalTrans, the City, and EHC, to address the impacts of climate change. EHC will coordinate with community action groups ensuring the project incorporates local input.

13. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea-level rise:** Project objectives, design, and siting consider and address vulnerabilities from climate change impacts other than sea-level rises, such as high heat and climate resiliency planning. Reducing the effects of high heat will improve public health.
14. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The project design and construction methods include measures to avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emissions to the extent feasible and consistent with the project objectives.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15262, because it involves only planning studies and feasibility analyses for possible future actions that have not yet been approved or funded. The project is also categorically exempt under Section 15306, which exempts basic data collection and resource evaluation activities. Environmental factors will be considered in the studies undertaken pursuant to this authorization.

Upon approval of the project, the Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Exemption.