

SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY

Staff Recommendation
October 2, 2020

Oakland Shoreline Leadership Academy Project

Project No. RA-019
Project Manager: Linda Tong

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$180,000 to West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project to host a community-led shoreline habitat restoration planning process in Alameda County and to provide local residents from economically disadvantaged communities information and training to enable them to meaningfully engage in the planning process.

LOCATION: Oakland shoreline, Alameda; Measure AA Region: East Bay

MEASURE AA PROGRAM CATEGORY: Safe, Clean Water and Pollution Prevention Program; Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program; Integrated Flood Protection Program; Shoreline Public Access Program.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority adopt the following resolution pursuant to The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act, Gov. Code Sections 66700-66706:

“The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed one hundred eighty thousand dollars (\$180,000) to West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project to host a community-led planning process for shoreline habitat restoration in Alameda County and to give local residents from economically disadvantaged communities education and training to assist them in meaningfully engaging in the planning process.

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

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Authority funding.”

Staff further recommends that the Authority adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act, Gov. Code Sections 66700-66706.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with The San Francisco Bay Clean Water, Pollution Prevention and Habitat Restoration Measure (Measure AA).”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Authority authorize a grant of up to \$180,000 to West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP) to carry out the Oakland Shoreline Leadership Academy. The Shoreline Leadership Academy will educate a cohort of local residents about environmental and social issues along the Oakland shoreline and host a community-led planning process in which the cohort of residents will help to develop shoreline restoration projects in Alameda County (Exhibit 1).

Oakland’s economically disadvantaged communities are on the frontline when it comes to sea level rise, flooding, toxic and hazardous waste, and other issues affecting the Oakland shoreline. Sea level rise and flooding could bring toxins into vulnerable neighborhoods and lead to increased illnesses, or could displace vulnerable shoreline communities altogether. Oakland communities, especially economically disadvantaged communities, need to be informed about these issues and engaged in creating the solutions. The Shoreline Leadership Academy will initiate a planning process to identify and prioritize shoreline restoration projects in Alameda County; as part of this process, the Shoreline Leadership Academy will train residents of disadvantaged communities to tackle issues affecting their shoreline, and guide program participants through a community-led planning process intended to lead to implementable shoreline restoration projects.

The Shoreline Leadership Academy will be a six-month program, with participants meeting two days a month – one day consisting of educational training, and the second day consisting of community planning. The overall project has the following objectives:

- Recruit a cohort of 18 residents from economically disadvantaged communities living on or near the shoreline in Oakland to participate in the Shoreline Leadership Academy.
- Hire up to two consultants with community planning expertise (e.g., with experience in leading the East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative and the development of the Oakland Equitable Climate Action Plan), and partner with organizations (e.g., San Francisco Estuary Institute) to develop and implement a curriculum that will cover topics such as:
 - Understanding San Francisco Bay shoreline ecology
 - Sea level rise and toxins in the shoreline environment
 - Habitat restoration and public access along the shoreline
 - Economic development along the shoreline

- Green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to climate change
- Communicating environmental issues to the public
- Asset mapping, developing community engagement plans, and co-developing shoreline restoration projects
- Help program participants build partnerships with entities involved in shoreline restoration projects, and empower program participants to engage in and lead community planning efforts that can result in implementable shoreline habitat restoration projects.
- Guide program participants in developing a community engagement and communications strategy to educate others in their communities about relevant environmental and social issues and how they could be addressed through shoreline restoration projects.
- Invite project managers of one or more shoreline habitat and public access project planning efforts to present to program participants; guide participants in providing comments on the planning documents or providing recommendations on how to effectively engage frontline communities in the design and implementation of the project(s).
- Facilitate collaboration between program participants and partner entities to fundraise or apply for grants to move individual project ideas forward into planning, design, and implementation phases.

The West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP) is well-positioned to carry out the Shoreline Leadership Academy. WOEIP is a resident-led, community-based environmental justice organization dedicated to achieving healthy homes, healthy jobs, and healthy neighborhoods for all who live, work, learn and play in West Oakland. WOEIP previously hosted a similar program that educated participants on topics related to air pollution and air quality regulation, and how to advocate successfully for community health. WOEIP staff are also involved in regional collaborations that help build its network of partnerships, such as the Resilient Communities Initiative environmental justice coalition, and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC's) Adapting to Rising Tides Program.

WOEIP has decades of experience advocating for environmental justice for local communities, and the Shoreline Leadership Academy project has support from community representatives who participated in the East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative and helped develop the Oakland Equitable Climate Action Plan. Community representatives from these two efforts can use their expertise in community-led planning to help shape the framework for the program curriculum. WOEIP has also gathered support and formed partnerships with the Port of Oakland, BCDC, and San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) for the Shoreline Leadership Academy project (Exhibit 2).

Site Description:

If feasible, the Oakland Shoreline Leadership Academy may host meetings in the Observation Room at the Middle Harbor Shoreline Park owned by the Port of Oakland. The site overlooks the San Francisco Bay in West Oakland. If onsite participation is not possible due to public health orders, the program will be conducted online. Program participants will also be given tours of different sites along the shoreline and relevant projects if feasible, such as the East Bay Regional

Park District’s Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline Park (formerly Gateway Park) Project and West Oakland Link Project. They will also visit areas identified in the Final Community Plan produced by the East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative, a partnership between the City of Oakland Planning Bureau and twelve community-based organizations focused on equity-based planning for Deep East Oakland.

PROJECT FINANCING

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority	\$180,000
Project Total	\$180,000

CONSISTENCY WITH AUTHORITY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION, THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION AUTHORITY ACT:

The proposed project is consistent with Government Code Section 66704.5 of the Authority’s enabling legislation, and therefore is eligible for grant funding from the Authority. West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project is a 501(3)(c) nonprofit organization, which is an eligible grantee under Section 66704.5(a). The project will occur along the Oakland shoreline of Alameda County, which is within the Authority’s jurisdiction. The project will provide the education and community-led planning necessary to future development of plans for restoration of natural habitats, enhancement of flood management features, or improvement of public access on the shoreline in the San Francisco Bay Area, making it an eligible project as defined in Section 66704.5(b). This project would also increase public access to engaging in planning processes that often leave behind communities most impacted by environmental burdens. Funding this community planning project is consistent with Section 66704.5(e), which allows the Authority to award grants for “all phases of planning, construction, monitoring, operation, and maintenance” of eligible projects.

CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:

The proposed project is consistent with the programs and activities of Measure AA, as outlined below:

The project would support the *Safe, Clean Water and Pollution Prevention Program*’s purpose of removing pollution, trash, and harmful toxins from the Bay, by facilitating the learning and partnerships needed for communities to reduce pollution and engage in restoration activities, protect public health, and make fish and wildlife healthier.

The project would support the *Vital Fish, Bird and Wildlife Habitat Program*’s purpose of significantly improving wildlife habitat, by laying the groundwork for future community participation in stewardship, maintenance, and monitoring of habitat restoration projects in and around the Bay.

The project would support the *Integrated Flood Protection Program*’s purpose of using natural habitats to protect communities along the Bay’s shoreline from coastal flooding, by exploring the potential for nature-based flood protection through wetland and habitat restoration.

The project would support the *Shoreline Public Access Program*'s purpose of enhancing the quality of life of Bay Area residents through safer and improved public access, by developing strategies for producing effective interpretive materials and special outreach events about pollution prevention, wildlife habitat, public access, and flood protection, to protect the Bay's health and encourage community engagement.

CONSISTENCY WITH MEASURE AA PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA:

1. **Greatest positive impact.** The proposed project will ensure that planning processes and decision-making on issues affecting the Oakland shoreline can be in the hands of community members, which would encourage a sense of ownership and investment in preserving their shoreline habitats.
2. **Greatest long-term impact.** The future restoration projects and activities that come out of the Shoreline Leadership Academy planning process will have long-term impacts because residents will be invested in maintaining the projects they help to create and lead. The educational program, combined with existing local knowledge, will benefit current and future generations through increasing care and respect for natural environments.
3. **Leveraging resources and partnerships.** The proposed project will leverage WOEIP's relationships with several local and regional agencies. WOEIP will work with Authority staff, BCDC, and SFEI to develop and execute the program curriculum. The Port of Oakland may also help with the community planning process by providing insight into current city issues and shoreline development projects.
4. **Economically disadvantaged communities.** The proposed project is meant to benefit economically disadvantaged communities in West Oakland, which are predominantly Black, Latinx, and Asian/Pacific Islander communities. The Shoreline Leadership Academy will pay participants for their time in the program and will equip participants with knowledge to participate in future phases of shoreline restoration projects and activities.
5. **Benefits to economy.** The proposed project will provide financial compensation for up to 18 participants and garner more support for nature-based protection of shoreline communities. Participants will also have the opportunity to advocate for restoration projects that include workforce development or other components that contribute to the economic vitality of West Oakland communities.
6. **Engage youth and young adults.** A wide range of residents, including youth, will be recruited for the Shoreline Leadership Academy. Program participants will gain experience in community planning for natural resource protection and will learn transferrable leadership skills.
7. **Coastal Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.** The Oakland Shoreline Leadership Academy is consistent with the Coastal Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. The proposed project can be implemented in a timely way

as it is the first stages of a community planning process, and WOEIP has numerous partnerships and networks to draw on to recruit participants and implement the program. The project would also provide a concrete way to include economically disadvantaged communities in the shoreline planning process before those communities are significantly impacted by sea level rise, further gentrification, and other environmental and social factors.

8. **San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Coastal Management Program.** The Shoreline Leadership Academy is consistent with BCDC's Bay Plan, part of its Coastal Management Program. In particular, the proposed project would support the Environmental Justice and Social Equity Policies of the Bay Plan, which state that the Commission recognizes the importance of low-income communities of color as invaluable stakeholders and is committed to uplifting the voices of communities who have been historically excluded from decision-making processes. Meaningfully involving these communities means making sure people can participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and health.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from preparing an environmental impact document under the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, California Code of Regulations Section 15262, because the project involves only very preliminary planning for possible future actions. The project is also categorically exempt under Section 15322, because the project consists of curriculum development and the educational program will not involve any physical alteration of a location. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.