
R-22-18
Meeting 22-02
January 27, 2022

CONSENT ITEM #C4

To: Board of Directors
Open Space Authority

From: Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

SUBJECT

Approve Match Funding for a France-California Conservation and Climate Exchange

REVENUE/COST

Expenditures by the Authority are estimated to not exceed \$45,000 towards a total project cost of approximately \$172,000.

BACKGROUND

Terre et Cité is a non-profit conservation organization based in Igny, France, just south of Paris, whose mission is to preserve the Plateau de Saclay, an agricultural region of about 7,700 acres in size that is adjacent to an area known as the European Silicon Valley. Terre et Cité currently has 15 full time staff, and a 10- member Board of Directors.

On September 11, 2018, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) and Terre et Cité partnered to lead a bus tour of Coyote Valley as part of the Global Climate Action Summit organized by then-Governor Jerry Brown. The tour highlighted the parallels between the Coyote Valley and the Plateau de Saclay - agricultural landscapes that support significant biodiversity situated at the edge of agrowing urban region. The tour generated ideas for further conservation science and policy collaboration between the Authority and Terre et Cité that had been discussed by its respective leaders.

One outcome of this Global Climate Action Summit event was an invitation by a representative of the European Commission to continue the exchange between our two organizations that could at some future date include a study tour of the Plateau de Saclay with selected elected officials from both sides of the Atlantic and which would be fully funded by the European Commission.

The 2020 pandemic - and the resulting travel restrictions – delayed the study tour, though Terre et Cité, the Authority, and other partners, have led a series of international webinars focused on how natural and working lands at the urban edge can contribute to community sustainability and socioecological resilience in the face of climate change, in order to maintain momentum and generate new ideas for mutual benefit of the organizations' respective conservation missions. The first such webinar took place on January 28, 2021, and was very well received with over 300 live participants, and over 1,600 views of the online video. Subsequent webinars took place on October 7, 2021 and November 18, 2021, covering topics related to California's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) program and the state's Healthy Soils program, respectively.

Each of the webinars featured Coyote Valley as a case study for implementation of innovative biodiversity and agricultural conservation policies, practices and programs. The webinars have fostered a fruitful exchange of ideas and practices, helped the Authority build relationships with state agency partners and strengthened the case for Coyote Valley to serve as a model of climate-focused, multi-benefit land conservation that matches the intent for the State of California's goal of preserving 30% of its land and waters by 2030, also known as "30x30". The implementation of 30x30 and other climate initiatives at both state and federal levels, could lead to significant project funding opportunities for the Authority to implement its mission.

On May 27, 2021, the Authority Board of Directors approved a Cooperation Agreement with Terre et Cité, attached to this report for reference, to formalize a commitment between the two organizations for development and execution of the then-remaining international webinars. The Cooperation Agreement also allowed Terre et Cité to pursue grant funding in France to support the partnership.

DISCUSSION

The previously-delayed study tour of the Plateau de Saclay, now being referred to as a France-California Conservation and Climate Exchange, is currently being planned for the week of July 11 – 15, 2022. The goal of the Exchange is to share innovative solutions that build biodiversity and climate resilience for communities adjacent to natural and working landscapes, by comparing ideas, initiatives, and actions in Coyote Valley with those on the Plateau de Saclay. The 2021 international webinars touched on many of these, and the tour would allow much deeper exploration of the opportunities and barriers associated with the implementation of the differing conservation approaches on either side of the Atlantic. This exchange of approaches and implementation specifics has the potential to lead to significant outcomes that advance climate resilience in both landscapes.

The Exchange would include a California delegation comprised of nine members, currently intended to comprise the following representatives:

- Two from the Open Space Authority
- One from the City of San Jose
- One from the County of Santa Clara
- Three from the State of California – combination of elected officials and agency staff
- Two academic researchers / land use policy experts

A delegation from France is still being assembled, but is anticipated to include at least as many, though likely more participants than from California.

During the COVID pandemic, the anticipated grant from the European Commission expired without opportunity to renew. Terre et Cité has secured replacement funds for the majority of the tour costs. The total project cost, which includes airplane travel from California to France and hotel accommodations for the California delegation, plus per diem meals, France-internal travel, and informational materials for all participants, is estimated to be \$172,000. Terre et Cité is also in the process of pursuing an additional \$17,000 in grant funds. Authority staff is therefore seeking approval of a not-to-exceed amount of \$45,000 from the 2021-2022 Open Space Authority budget to close this gap in funding for the Exchange.

If approved, this action would not constitute a budget amendment. Expenditures in the current fiscal year would be made from funds previously approved in the FY 2021/22 budget. Expenditures

anticipated to be made in the next fiscal year would be proposed through the next fiscal year's budget process.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve Resolution 22-14 that authorizes Authority expenditures for the France-California Conservation and Climate Exchange, in an amount not to exceed \$45,000.

Prepared by:

Marc Landgraf, External Affairs Manager

Attachment(s):

Resolution 22-14 – A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Santa Clara Valley OpenSpace Authority Authorizing Expenditures Not to Exceed \$45,000 for Contribution to the Total Project Cost of a France-California Conservation and Climate Exchange

Exhibit D -- Cooperation Agreement Between the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and Terre et Cité