

Action Requested: **INFORMATION/ACTION**



NAPA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
TAC Agenda Letter

TO: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
FROM Kate Miller, Executive Director
REPORT BY: Danielle Schmitz, Planning Manager
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SUBJECT: Suscol Headwaters Preserve Phase II – Jameson Canyon Mitigation Funding

RECOMMENDATION

That the TAC recommend that the NVTA Board approve future STIP funds to the County of Napa in the amount not to exceed \$300,000 to reimburse the County for environmental mitigation on the Jameson Canyon Widening Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Jameson Canyon's Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife are requiring project mitigation that would preserve 130 acres of open space for project impacts to the red legged frog habitat. The project budget had set aside \$2.1 million for this mitigation but property prices have since soared well beyond estimates and consequently the amount of funds that Caltrans set aside is insufficient to acquire the necessary property to meet the mitigation requirement.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a fiscal impact? Yes, \$300,000 of future State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Two years ago, Caltrans proposed seeking additional STIP funds from Solano Transportation Authority and NVTA county STIP shares to address the unfunded portion of the Jameson Canyon Project red legged frog mitigation. However, NVTA staff devised an alternative plan that involves partnering with the Napa County Parks and Open Space

District (NCPOSD) on the Suscol Creek project. This proposal would not only minimize the impact on County STIP funds but would bring an additional \$2.1 million to the Napa Valley to acquire additional open space by contributing to phase 2 of the Suscol Creek Project and thereby providing a great resource for Napa Valley communities.

Suscol Creek Phase II is a planned but unfunded project of NCPOSD. The project entails acquiring 298 acres of new open space and 5.3 miles of new trail that would provide public access to Skyline Park. Although no red-legged frogs were found on the phase I and II parcels, the US Fish & Wildlife agreed to approve the property as mitigation providing that NCPOSD build a frog pond and establish a maintenance endowment. This has resulted in a shortfall for acquiring the property and meeting the US Fish & Wildlife additional demands. Depending on the size of the endowment, which is still being negotiated, the project falls short by roughly \$300,000.

In addition to Caltrans' \$2.1 million commitment, the Coastal Conservancy has verbally committed \$500,000, and NCPOSD has budgeted an additional \$200,000 by deferring other needs. Napa County Public Works will provide general funds to NCPOSD for the endowment fund of up to \$300,000, providing that the NVTa Board reimburse the County by providing future "STIP" dollars from NVTa.

NVTa staff will be presenting this proposal to the NVTa Board at its May meeting. NVTa's interest is to keep the funding in Napa County and not have to exhaust the next cycle of Countywide STIP cycle to cover mitigation efforts for Jameson Canyon which are likely to be significantly higher in cost and would not necessarily go towards resources in Napa County.

NCPOSD's deadline to acquire property is June 30, 2017.

Table A reflects the draft budget for completed Phase II of the Suscol Creek/Jameson Canyon Mitigation Package:

Table A	
Tentative Costs	
Suscol Phase II	\$2,600,000
Frog Pond	100,000
Endowment (Up to)	600,000
Total	\$3,300,000
Tentative Revenues	
Caltrans-NVTA-STA/Jameson Mitigation	\$2,100,000
Coastal Conservancy	500,000
Napa County Open Space	400,000
Total	\$3,000,000
Shortfall	(\$300,000)

If we fail to complete the funding package, NCPOSD will lose the \$2.1 million and its option to acquire Phase 2 of Suscol Creek, and NVTA will still be required to fund mitigation costs through its county STIP shares for another eligible property to mitigate for Jameson Canyon Widening.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Attachment(s): (1) Map of Suscol Headwaters Preserve Phase I and Phase II

