

the activity qualifies for an Exemption pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines. Thus, no environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Not Applicable

DISCUSSION

In 2006, the City of Chula Vista launched the NatureScape program with the goal of creating numerous “Certified Wildlife Habitats” in yards throughout Chula Vista using the certification process of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Workshops were conducted to educate citizens about key components to address to create NatureScape environment. Another goal was to meet the criteria for the City to become a Certified Wildlife Habitat and a one-year designation was awarded in 2012. Since inception, NatureScape has certified 609 sites including residents (95 percent), schools and other landscapes. Currently, the City only provides basic information handouts via booths at community events and during Home Checkup Evaluation as funding has been an issue to continue the program at its previous level of staff engagement. Funding from Sweetwater Authority allows City staff to relaunch the NatureScape program and staff plan to apply for additional funding opportunities to support the program.

NatureScape helps satisfy two objectives in the City’s 2017 Climate Action Plan directed at utilizing water education, technical assistance and hosting workshops so citizens can apply Water Smart practices to their yards. Additionally, NatureScape supports several aspects of the City’s Water Stewardship Plan.

Benefits of NatureScapes include resident participation in: building of healthy soil through composting resulting in water saving and lower yard maintenance; conservation of water resources (save water and money) by applying Water Smart techniques favored by water districts for our drought-laden region; and providing beneficial habitat to help preserve wildlife species (insects, birds, etc.) impacted by climate change. Additionally, it would expand engagement and education opportunities around water stewardship initiatives in Chula Vista. Creating NatureScapes provides a personalized back-to-nature outdoor experience and serves to enhance lifestyles in Chula Vista along with beneficial stress-relieving environments.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the City Council members and has found no property holdings within 500 feet of the boundaries of the property which is the subject of this action. Consequently, this item does not present a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under California Code of Regulations Title 2, section 18702.2(a)(11), for purposes of the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov’t Code §87100, et seq.).

Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision maker conflict of interest in this matter.

LINK TO STRATEGIC GOALS

The City’s Strategic Plan has five major goals: Operational Excellence, Economic Vitality, Healthy Community, Strong and Secure Neighborhoods and a Connected Community. The NatureScape program supports the Healthy Community and Connected Community goals as it encourages resident participation in activities that improve the City, creates a network of residents enhancing their yards, promotes conservation of water resources and provides beneficial habitat to help preserve

wildlife species impacted by climate change. Creating NatureScapes provides a personalized back-to-nature outdoor experience and serves to enhance lifestyles in Chula Vista along with beneficial stress-relieving environments.

CURRENT YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

These funds are to help offset the costs of relaunching the NatureScape program in the spring of 2018. The proposed budget amendments have no net fiscal impact to the General Fund; these one-time expenditures will be offset by one-time revenues.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed budget amendments are a one-time activity, there are no ongoing fiscal impacts associated with these budget amendments.

ATTACHMENT

1. Grant application

Staff Contact: Coleen Wisniewski, Sr. Conservation Specialist, Office of Sustainability, Economic Development Department