Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Planning Committee

June 12, 2026 **Agenda Item 8a – 26-0586**

Priority Conservation Area Grant Program: 2026 Grant Award Recommendations: Various Applicants (as set forth in Appendix B to this item) ($8 Million)

Subject:

Approval of $8 million in grants to advance Plan Bay Area 2050+ strategies to protect and enhance the region's natural and agricultural lands and improve outdoor access and urban greening through the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Grant Program.

Background:

On September 12, 2025, the MTC Planning Committee approved the release of an $8 million Call for Proposals for the PCA Grant Program to support the implementation of Plan Bay Area 2050+ Strategies EN5 (protect and manage high-value conservation lands) and EN6 (expand urban greening in communities). The PCA Grant Program, which has awarded over $38 million across three prior grant cycles, provides funding for projects that acquire, enhance, or improve designated PCAs. PCAs are geographically defined areas nominated through a voluntary, locally-driven process by cities, counties, and park/open space districts, and then designated by the Association of Bay Area Governments. The PCA planning framework was first developed in 2007, but it underwent a significant refresh between 2022 and 2024, resulting in the adoption of new and updated PCAs by ABAG in 2025. This Call for Proposals was intentionally issued after ABAG adopted the new and updated PCA designations developed through the PCA Refresh, ensuring that the new and amended geographies were eligible for funding.

Application and Evaluation Process:

Consistent with committee guidance, the PCA Grant Program 2026 Grant Guidelines and Call for Proposals established grant eligibility, funding targets, and evaluation criteria and detailed a two-step application and evaluation process. PCA Grant Program guidelines integrated the PCA Refresh into its evaluation criteria to ensure funding decisions reflect updated data, priorities, and regional conservation objectives. Eligible applicants and project activities remained similar to prior PCA grant cycles. A Call for Proposals was released on October 30, 2025, and kicked off a two-step application and evaluation process. Letters of Interest (LOI) were submitted by

December 19, 2025, and reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of staff from MTC, ABAG/SFEP, and the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC). Fifty-three LOIs requesting more than $35.9 million were received and evaluated. All applicants were notified on February 2, 2026, and twenty-eight projects were recommended to prepare full applications. Applicants provided full applications by March 20, 2026.

Recommended Awards:

Based on the evaluation of the applications, staff are recommending approval of $8 million in PCA grants for the following awards (Table 1; Attachment B).

Table 1. Recommended PCA Grant Program Project Awards

#	Applicant	Project Name	Project County	Proposed Award
1	City of Alameda	Wooden Bridge Replacement Feasibility Study	Alameda	$500,000
2	Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation	Restoring Connections: Deep East Oakland Community Stewardship, Creeks, & Shoreline Access	Alameda	$450,000
3	City of San Pablo	McNeil Park	Contra Costa	$500,000
4	City of San Rafael	Canal Boatyard Urban Park Connection	Marin	$800,000
5	Napa County Resource Conservation District	Resilient Suscol Creek: Climate-Ready Habitat Planning	Napa	$440,000
6	San Francisco Recreation & Park Department	Twin Peaks Promenade – Bay Area Ridge Trail Connection & Habitat Restoration	San Francisco	$500,000
7	Grassroots Ecology	Fire & Flora: Resilient Foothills Initiative	San Mateo	$210,000
8	San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA)	Bay Trail SFO Gap Closure Project – Phase 1 (PE & Environmental)	San Mateo	$600,000
9	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	Highway 17 Wildlife & Ridge Trail Crossings and Connections	Santa Clara	$750,000
10	Peninsula Open Space Trust	North Coyote Valley Wildlife & Trails Study	Santa Clara	$250,000

#	Applicant	Project Name	Project County	Proposed Award
11	UC Cooperative Extension	Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Outreach & Awareness Campaign	Santa Clara	$200,000
12	Solano County, Department of Resource Management	Farm to Market Phase 4	Solano	$800,000
13	Western Rivers Conservancy (with Kashia Band of Pomo Indians)	South Fork Gualala River Acquisition	Sonoma	$750,000
14	Petaluma River Park Foundation	Petaluma River Park	Sonoma	$550,000
15	Sonoma Land Trust	Osprey Hill Ranch	Sonoma	$450,000
16	City of Sonoma (with Sonoma Ecology Center)	Improving Habitat Quality and Bike/Ped Connectivity on PCA Creeks in the City of Sonoma	Sonoma	$250,000
			TOTAL	**$8,000,000**

Next Steps:

Staff will work with selected awardees to finalize scopes of work, budgets, and timelines.

Issues:

None.

Recommendations:

Approve $8,000,000 in recommended grants to advance Plan Bay Area 2050+ strategies to protect and enhance the region's natural and agricultural lands and improve outdoor access and urban greening through the Priority Conservation Area Grant Program. Associated programming revisions to MTC Resolution Nos. 3989, Revised and 4505, Revised are included in the June Programming and Allocations Committee agenda.

Award funding pending cooperative development of a scope between MTC and the project sponsor.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Presentation
- Attachment B: 2026 Priority Conservation Area Grant Program Award Recommendations

Andrew B. Fremier