June 9, 2015

Board of Supervisors
Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, California 94903

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE THE PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH MARIN AUDUBON SOCIETY IN THE AMOUNT OF $100,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF HISTORIC BAYLANDS IN CORTE MADERA

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize the President to execute the agreement.
2. Authorize the transfer of $100,000 from the Measure A Reserve for Acquisition to Measure A Land Acquisition.

SUMMARY:

Marin County Parks has received a request from the Marin Audubon Society (MAS) for a grant of $100,000 to support the acquisition of five acres of undeveloped property on the shore of San Francisco Bay in the Town of Corte Madera, Assessor's Parcels 023-040-06, 023-040-10, and 023-040-11. These parcels are in the Town of Corte Madera east of the railroad tracks and approximately one-quarter mile south of Corte Madera Creek. The zoning on the property is commercial office use, but it is currently undeveloped. This land is historic baylands covered by fill and has significant wetland restoration potential.

Preservation of the property for public open space purposes is supported by the Marin County Parks Strategic Plan, which includes a land conservation component and identifies the Central Marin Baylands as a priority acquisition area. Additionally, the Marin Countywide Plan identifies the Corte Madera Bayfront as an area to target for acquisition. Finally, the Plan Bay Area (Association of Bay Area Governments) identifies Central Marin Bayfront, Madera Bay Park, as a priority conservation area.

The appraised value of the property is $1,075,000. MAS has applied for or secured additional funding from: the California State Coastal Conservancy ($400,000), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ($175,000), Marin Baylands Advocates ($58,000), Audubon California ($30,000), and various small donations from private individuals, public agencies, private organizations, and foundations (approximately $300,000). The property is adjacent to existing protected tidal marsh and upland
areas including Muzzi Marsh (Golden Gate Bridge District) and the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve (California Department of Fish and Wildlife). When acquired, the property would join a contiguous block of 350 acres of protected intertidal and upland areas along the Corte Madera shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

MAS is purchasing this property to restore its wetland and transitional habitats. MAS will oversee the restoration project, which includes removal of fill from 50 to 65 percent of the property to allow for the restoration of tidal marsh and contouring the remaining uplands to allow for upland refugia and sea level rise accommodation. MAS will revegetate the uplands with native plant species appropriate to the habitat and allow for natural recruitment of marsh vegetation in the excavated areas. After completing this work, MAS will transfer the property to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which owns and manages the surrounding wetland areas as part of the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve.

Staff proposes that the county’s contribution be funded by the “Preserve Natural Lands” subprogram of the Measure A (Marin County Ordinance 3586) Parks and Open Space Program. The "Preserve Natural Lands" subprogram receives 20 percent of the Measure A funds reserved for Marin County Parks and is dedicated to the acquisition of natural areas.

Staff is developing policies and procedures that will enable staff and your board to consider future requests of a similar nature by outside agencies and organizations that desire to help the county achieve its open space preservation goals.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Sufficient capacity exists in the Measure A Parks and Open Space Fund 24590. The recommended action requires the following changes to Measure A Parks and Open Space Budget Fund Center 5200031000:

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<th>Commitment Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>5482000</td>
<td>Land Acquisition</td>
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<td>9000005</td>
<td>Reserve For Acquisition</td>
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**REVIEWED BY:**

[ X ] Dept. of Finance [ X ] N/A
[ X ] County Counsel [ ] N/A
[ ] Human Resources [ X ] N/A

Senior Open Space Planner James Raives is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Miska
Assistant Director

Merit Number: FMBB 1000223414