



## Land Use, Housing & Air Quality Committee

June 4, 2007

### Contribution to Valley Vision Regional Open Space Effort

**Issue:** Valley Vision is seeking funding to complete phase I and launch phase II of a regional open space effort, which supports SACOG's NEPA streamlining work and Greenprint. A contribution of \$5,000 is being sought to assist in the effort this year.

**Recommendation:** That the Land Use, Housing & Air Quality Committee recommend that Board authorize a \$5,000 contribution to Valley Vision's regional open space effort from the Natural Resources Protection Planning account.

**Discussion:** Valley Vision, a non-profit organization that coordinates civic engagement on regional growth issues, has undertaken a survey of stakeholders across the region to inventory protected lands and map the results. Valley Vision intends to complete this phase I work and initiate phase II, coordinating with stakeholders and broader public outreach to identify regional open space goals. The attached Action Plan details the goals and timeline for the effort.

SACOG contributed \$5,000 to this effort last year since it supports SACOG's work to streamline NEPA review of transportation projects, a major component of which is the identification of open space resources in the region and potential strategies to maintain those resources. Valley Vision has nearly completed an important component of the open space inventory – protected lands – and the phase II outreach would help lay the groundwork for developing long-range open space management strategies needed to meet NEPA streamlining objectives. The effort would also be an important foundation for the Greenprint project anticipated to begin later this year.

Stakeholders in this effort include the Nature Conservancy, the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, Breathe California, the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, the Sacramento Metro Chamber, the Building Industry Association, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency. These stakeholders also helped fund the effort last year and are being asked to contribute again this year. SACOG's contribution would be ten percent of the total funds Valley Vision is seeking for this phase and would pay for work that is needed for the NEPA streamlining project and Greenprint.

Valley Vision's effort is within the objectives of the Natural Resources Protection Planning program for FY 2007-08 and sufficient funds are available.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Executive Director

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Attachment

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## OPEN SPACE PHASE II & III PROPOSAL

Kristine C. Mazzei  
March 22, 2007

### PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

In early 2006 Valley Vision assembled a Steering Committee to guide an exploratory phase of an open space initiative for the six-county Sacramento region. Each Steering Committee member has helped to shape the initial research and their organizations have contributed a small amount of money to fund this effort. Members include:

Jane Hagedorn with Breathe California Sacramento-Emigrant Trails  
Mike Eaton with The Nature Conservancy  
Dennis Rogers with the North State Building Industry Association  
Larry Greene with Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District  
Mike McKeever with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments  
Tim Washburn and Stein Buer with the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency  
Aimee Rutledge with the Sacramento Valley Conservancy  
Rich Radmacher with Sacramento County, Department of Regional Parks (previously represented by Ron Suter)  
and Susan Frazier with Valley Vision

In the initial meetings of the Steering Committee the members decided that a “regional conversation” about open space needed to be grounded in independent research and baseline data. Most importantly, the Committee believed it was necessary to create an up-to-date inventory and map of all regional open space lands that are currently protected in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. These lands include everything from preserved wildlife habitats and parks to protected farmland and floodplains. The map also includes some basic information about existing HCP/NCCP planning efforts at the county level. Our working definitions for *open space* and *protected lands* is included as Attachment “A.”

After several months of data gathering, Valley Vision and SACOG presented a draft GIS map to the Committee in November, 2006 for their review and feedback. Overall, the Steering Committee expressed approval of the protected lands map. The committee supported Valley Vision’s goal of further refining the data and vetting the map with data contributors. It was agreed that there is a lot of potential for the map and inventory to be used as an outreach and

communication tool, but a specific public information process was not identified. Furthermore, the group asked Valley Vision to draft a proposal and budget for the next phase of activity (approximately 6 months of work).

From December, 2006 through February, 2007 Valley Vision hosted meetings with small groups of experts from each County, including lead planners, the leaders of the HCP and NCCP processes, and the leaders of the NGO's that have the greatest familiarity with the land preservation programs in each location. These meetings were designed to gather input of the draft protected lands map, and identify areas needing further research and refinement. The outcomes of these meetings were used to inform the process and timeline described below.

## **2007 WORK PLAN & TIMELINE**

### **Complete Phase I Work Product**

#### **Refinement of the Protected Lands Inventory *January - April***

Our meetings with the NGO's and County representatives taught us that the refinement of a protected lands map requires additional data gathering to achieve a point where we would feel the product was accurate at a ~95% level (these are just "gut" estimates, but as of right now we would figure that the mapped information is about 80% complete and true). The most significant challenges we need to address include:

- Further identification of protected mitigation lands, specifically ones owned by growing cities in the region
- Data on many of the same properties came from various sources, but often arrived with inconsistent information on name, ownership, boundaries, and access
- We have a shortage of information on the level of public access for most protected lands on the map (options: some access, limited access, no access); this greatly impacts our ability to share the information with the public since outreach materials will not depict land that is protected yet not accessible to the public
- Many counties are presently creating or updating the source maps that contribute to our work in progress, and these new resources need to be gathered
- Fine-tuned resolution of information about the protected parcels that comprise larger protected areas (one example: the many parcels that make up the American River Parkway)

Completion of this stage of the process is dependent upon the availability of SACOG's GIS staff, because they have been completing all of the technical work related to the map and inventory.

Additionally, as a separate work product Valley Vision will create a matrix detailing the current status of all of the region's Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans. The matrix will share information about all of the elements that each Plan is expected to include as part of the finished product, as well as an estimated timeline for completion.

### **Phase II: Sharing the Inventory and Beginning to Identify Regional Project Goals**

### **Sharing the Protected Lands Inventory with the Region** *May - August*

After reviewing the draft Protected Lands Map in November, the Steering Committee agreed that the public should have an opportunity to learn more about the status of the open spaces surrounding the region. Once the inventory has been refined to a sufficient level of accuracy Valley Vision will work with the Steering Committee to create an outreach and communications strategy to publicize the outcomes. Outreach will most likely involve developing press releases to share the information, and launching a website for the project.

### **Defining Regional Open Space Goals (Part 1)** *August - December*

Valley Vision needs to continue meeting with the Steering Committee membership, as well as the County and NGO leadership to more narrowly define the next steps for the Open Space initiative. In order to identify a process that will be successful in the region, we need clarity around whether the goals are oriented around developing new open space funding sources, creating more connections between flood control and land preservation, protecting the region's biodiversity, increasing recreation areas, and/or some other high level outcome(s).

Seeking “convergence” on goals for an open space project will require multiple small meetings with individuals from the Steering Committee to gather their ideas and recommendations, as well as a few facilitated sessions engaging the Steering Committee and the County and NGO leaders to seek input and buy-in from these primary stakeholders (those that are essential for the success and implementation of this project). These meetings will shape the long-term action steps for a regional open space project.

To begin this process, Valley Vision will complete the following steps:

- Convene 4 meetings with an expanded “Steering Committee” to refine the goals and scope of work for an open space project
- Conduct 15 one-on-one interviews with regional leaders that will help to define the goals and boundaries of an open space project
- Facilitate one broader regional meeting (50 participating stakeholders) to discuss potential future directions

## **2008 WORK PLAN & TIMELINE**

### **Phase III: Identify Regional Project Goals, Process, and Leadership Structure**

#### **Defining Regional Open Space Goals and Process (Part 2)** *January – April*

Valley Vision will continue the effort to identify broadly supported project goals, and will work with the expanded Steering Committee and regional leaders to answer additional questions:

1. What is the overall process design that will help us meet our goals?
2. To what extent should the project be driven by experts on open space preservation versus being an inclusive, grassroots effort that seeks support from diverse stakeholders?
3. How should we proceed with a region-scaled project without impeding progress on the subregional HCP and NCCP efforts?

In order to resolve these issues, Valley Vision will complete the following steps:

- Convene 4 meetings with an expanded “Steering Committee” to refine the goals and scope of work for an open space project
- Conduct 25 one-on-one interviews with regional leaders that will help to define the goals and boundaries of an open space project
- Facilitate one broader regional meeting (75-100 participating stakeholders) to launch regional initiative

**Assembling Funding Support and Project Leadership** *March - July*

Any next steps that are identified for the Open Space initiative will demand funding support for staffing and technical assistance. Valley Vision will assemble a budget and complete the fundraising activities that will be necessary to carry the identified project forward towards implementation. Furthermore, it is likely that the leadership structure of the project will need to evolve and expand to fit the goals of the effort. Valley Vision staff will need to organize and assemble this new group of people and ensure they are all prepared to embark upon the project together.

## DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2007 PHASE I & PHASE II ACTIVITIES

Valley Vision Expense Category	Managing Partner	Project Associate	Staffing total Hrs x rate	Direct Costs
<b>Billing Rates</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$85</b>		
<b>TASKS:</b>				
Task 1: Refinement of Protected Lands Inventory *	40.0	120.0	\$ 15,200.00	
Task 2: Sharing Protected Lands Inventory with the Region	70.0	80.0	\$ 15,550.00	\$ 3,000.00
Task 3: Defining Regional Open Space Goals (Part 1)	70.0	100.0	\$ 17,250.00	\$ 5,000.00
<b>Professional Staff Subtotal</b>	<b>180.0</b>	<b>300.0</b>	<b>\$ 48,000.00</b>	
<b>Administrative Fee (10%)</b>			<b>\$ 4,800.00</b>	
<b>Staffing Subtotal</b>			<b>\$ 52,800.00</b>	
<b>Direct Costs Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 8,000.00</b>
<b>Valley Vision In-Kind Contribution (20%)</b>				<b>\$ (10,560.00)</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>				<b>\$ 50,240.00</b>

\* The accomplishment of Task 1 depends upon a significant staffing contribution from SACOG to complete the technical GIS work.

## DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2008 PHASE III ACTIVITIES

Valley Vision Expense Category	Managing Partner	Project Associate	Staffing total Hrs x rate	Direct Costs
<b>Billing Rates</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$85</b>		
<b>TASKS:</b>				
Task 1: Defining Regional Open Space Goals and Process (Part 2)	115.0	80.0	\$ 21,175.00	\$ 3,000.00
Task 2: Assembling Funding Support and Project Leadership	200.0	40.0	\$ 28,400.00	\$ 1,200.00
<b>Professional Staff Subtotal</b>	<b>315.0</b>	<b>120.0</b>	<b>\$ 49,575.00</b>	
<b>Administrative Fee (10%)</b>			<b>\$ 4,957.50</b>	
<b>Staffing Subtotal</b>			<b>\$ 54,532.50</b>	
<b>Direct Costs Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 4,200.00</b>
<b>Valley Vision In-Kind Contribution (20%)</b>				<b>\$ (10,906.50)</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>				<b>\$ 47,826.00</b>

## ATTACHMENT A

This document defines “open space” and “protected lands” for the purposes of the protected lands inventory undertaken by Valley Vision with a group of regional partners. This is a living document; as this project progresses, we expect changes may be made to these definitions. Thus, we have endeavored to write them as broadly as is feasible to begin with.

Our definition of “open space” is adapted from these sources: California State Planning, Zoning and Development Law (code 65560), the City of Sacramento -- County of Sacramento Draft Open Space Issues document, and the classification system used in the Bay Area protected lands inventory project.

“**Open space**” is any parcel or area of land or water used in any of the following manners:

1. Land used for the preservation of natural resources, like habitat areas, habitat corridors, habitat buffers
2. Land used for the managed production of resources, like agriculture, timber, rangelands, and urban agricultural transition areas
3. Land used for outdoor recreation like trails, parks, alternative transportation corridors (i.e., non-motorized vehicle trails between parks and developed areas)
4. Land used for public health and safety like flood and stormwater detention basins, including stream and river corridors
5. Land used for public infrastructure like utility easements, community gardens, airport protection areas
6. Land used for urban form/scenic resources like community gateways and greenways, view corridors

The categories defined as open space are broad and do not equate to protected lands.

“**Protected lands**” are lands that fall within the definition of “open space,” and will be designated according to the following types of protection:

- **Fee simple ownership** by an organization or agency for the purpose of one or more of the above open space uses,
- **Permanent easements** designed to protect land for the purpose of one or more of the above open space uses, and
- **Term-limited protected lands**, such as lands protected through agency programs (like the federal Grassland Reserve Program) and other non-permanent mechanisms, for the purpose of one or more of the above open space uses.