

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Green schoolyards planning grant for two campuses will include meetings with internal and external partners to conduct programming analysis; determination of project schedule and communication/staffing plans; decisions on the type and number of trees to plant; site assessments; topographical and utility reports to inform site design; management plans; and DSA approval/documents. All tasks are planned with the goal to have in place an upcoming, shovel-ready project.

Campus #1

Campus Name

Sunol Community School

Campus Address

258 Sunol St., San Jose, CA 95126

Explain in-need educational facility status:

Santa Clara County Office of Education's (SCCOE) Alternative Education Department (AED) serves at-risk youth at Community Schools for students released from their home districts. These students have been unsuccessful in other educational settings for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to: social, emotional, economic, and legal issues. Sunol Community School (SCS) is an AED campus that has been selected for its need for green spaces and its capacity to fulfill the grant requirements. SCS is a Title 1 school located in a San Jose urban community & serves students in grades 6-12. According to CalEnviroScreen, SCS is categorized as a low-income community. In addition, the California Heat Assessment tool rates SCS as a site to monitor (county/state level) due to its heat vulnerability score of 39.92. 79.1% of students are Latino. The CA Heat Assessment tool also indicates SCS has an average high temperature of 99.68°F. According to <http://www.ed-data.org/>, 48.7% of students qualify for Free or Reduced Price Meals (FRPM), & the school has an Unduplicated Pupil Percentage (UPP) of 53.85% (inclusive of English Learners, Foster Youth, or FRPM qualified during 2021-2022).

Project Background:

The Sunol Community School property has been the home of a schoolhouse since the 1890s. An ethnically diverse population of elementary and secondary students once occupied a two story schoolhouse on the property that also housed a fruit orchard. In the heart of Santa Clara Valley, the school sits just a block away from what was once a Dole Cannery where local fruit was canned for distribution around the world. Currently, students have access to a school garden, a large field, aquaponics grow stations, a basketball court, a picnic area, and a tetherball. However, there is a lot of sun and limited shaded areas. There are limited trees, too much concrete, and a large black asphalt space that radiates heat. To address excessive heat and lack of shade, the project will expand the tree canopy cover by planting trees. In the short term, a temporary shade structure will be constructed for use while trees are immature. In honor of the area's history, community members want to plant fruit trees to provide supplemental food sources for students, their families, and the community. The trees will help to reduce excess heat on the campus, reduce air pollution, provide opportunities for hands-on-learning environmental education, and produce fruit for consumption. The trees will also help reduce noise and extreme wind from the large field. The project will support the state's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. A long-term management plan will be developed including SCCOE and SCS staff, students, community members, and partners like Our City Forest. Based on community feedback, the project scope will include an outdoor classroom, fruit trees to incorporate into snacks/curriculum

lessons, planter installations, sensory gardens, and shade sails or temporary shade structures while trees are immature. The project will benefit the community by providing economic, environmental, mental, physical & social benefits to school staff, students, and families. Students and the community will provide authentic input for the long-term success of the project. Community engagement will be included in planning, construction, & long-term maintenance. Finally, robust educational programs developed by the SCCOE, Our City Forest, and SCS educators, will enhance the project via specialized curriculum for hands-on learning and environmental education.

Project Objectives

The planning timeline is 10 months from July 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024. Quarters align with the fiscal year calendar, July 1 - June 30th of each year.

Q1: January 1 - March 30; Q2: April 1 - June 30; Q3: July 1 - September 30; Q4: October 1 - December 31.

Objective 1: By the end of Q3 2023, meet with internal and external partners to conduct programming analysis.

Tasks: Conduct project kick-off meeting, schedule additional follow-up meetings, review budget, programming analysis.

Deliverables: Project schedule, project meeting minutes, communication/staffing plan.

Objective 2: By the end of Q3 2023, complete programming phase of project.

Tasks: Contact Michael Pistininzi (arborist), conduct a site visit, discuss tree & plant options, develop list of possible species and number of trees, assess space & needs. Acquire topographical & utility reports. Check for compliance with DSA, CEQA, BAAQMD, the CA Urban Forestry Act of 1978, and grant guidelines.

Deliverables: List of # & type of trees deemed appropriate for site; topographical & utility reports to inform site design; preliminary design concepts mapped; program analysis.

Objective 3: By the end of Q3 2023, complete initial schematic design phase to translate program requirements into an efficient building and landscape design.

Tasks: School event (in-person), bid for and contract with a landscape architect, meet to discuss design ideas, architect draws design options, review draft options

Deliverables: Community input. Site assessments and recommendations, geotechnical reports, schematic design concepts, & design documents.

Objective 4: By the end of Q4 2023, collaborate with site staff and students to finalize input on site plans & develop student curriculum.

Tasks: Community outreach, community event (in-person) with interpretation, post signs, advertise development plan, collect community input from staff and students, develop long-term management plan.

Deliverables: Qualitative data from community partners (staff and students) on proposed site improvements/design. Management plan, policies, best practices, staffing plan, and hands-on environmental curriculum lessons.

Objective 5: By the end of Q4 2023, complete the design development phase and share them with the school community.

Tasks: Exterior and landscape design features are finalized and materials will be selected. Analysis of community input, incorporate changes, meet with the architect to communicate changes, if applicable, and develop final site drawings.

Deliverables: Design documents, signs, share vision with community at community meeting.

Objective 6: By Q1 2024, complete Construction Documents phase and review for full compliance with local laws, regulations, DSA, CEQA requirements, Grant Guidelines, BAAQMD, the CA Urban Forestry Act of 1978 and GHG emission reduction requirements.

Tasks: Review all local laws and regulations, review CEQA compliance, review Grant Guidelines, assess potential GHG emission reductions, consult technical experts as applicable, appointment with DSA, incorporate input into the plan.

Deliverables: DSA approval/documents & shovel ready project plans in compliance with all applicable laws & regulations.

Objective 7: By Q2 (April) 2024, complete permitting and bid selection.

Tasks: Engage in RFP process, select bidder, identify needed permits, submit construction documents to apply for needed permits.

Deliverables: Required permits for site improvements. Vendor contract.

Campus #2

Campus Name

South County Annex

Campus Address

9300 Wren Ave, Gilroy, CA 95020

Explain in-need educational facility status

SCA is located in the Gilroy community and hosts the following student programs: Early Learning Services (State Preschool/ Head Start), Opportunity Youth Academy, Alternative Education Community School, Migrant Education, Special Education, and a Youth Health and Wellness Center.

CalEnviroScreen rates SCACS as a low income community & within ½ mile of disadvantaged communities. The CA Heat Assessment Tool rates SCA as a priority for the county based on its heat vulnerability score 43.89. The Healthy Places Index rates SCA in the 59% of healthy communities in CA. SCA has an average high temperature of 101.94°F. In addition, according to <http://www.ed-data.org/> the South County Annex has a Free Reduced Price Meal (FRPM) percentage of 86.4% and an Unduplicated Pupil Percentage (Foster Youth, FRPM, & English Language Learners) of 93.18%. All Head Start students and families must meet low-income requirements to be eligible for services.

Project Background

Surveys and interviews were conducted with SCCOE facilities staff and SCA staff (AED site director, OYA principal, OYA assistant principal, Head Start educators, Special Education teachers, & the manager of Superintendent Special Projects), to provide feedback on site concerns and ideas for improvement. The campus is located at the corner of an intersection with the majority covered in asphalt and concrete. Head Start has a courtyard & playground, with asphalt and play structures for elementary students. There is limited shade from trees and the only shade structure is not operational. The summer heat can be extreme. Cement-paved play areas behind brick walls radiate heat. The main concerns identified are: limited shade, excessive heat, limited grass/plants, limited trees, too much concrete, & lack of shaded seating. The outdoor areas surrounding the campus are not inviting for play, learning, or quiet respite.

The wind gusts can be powerful across the open spaces near the school. Recently, due to severe winter storms, the campus has lost trees, which are not prevalent on the site, and are too small to provide adequate shade.

Survey respondents indicated the following desired site improvements: tree canopy for shade, learning gardens for farm-to-table education, an amphitheater/ outdoor classroom, fruit trees for snacks/ curriculum lessons, natural playscapes, outdoor exercise equipment, and an ADA accessibility ramp from driveway near the Opportunity Youth Academy classroom which currently has a curb preventing wheelchair access. Specifically, one educator stated:

“I would like some bigger trees or a way to provide shade in the grass area, so classrooms can work outside ... without too much heat or sun during the spring and summer... [the courtyard is] used as a place to take a student who needs to regroup after what I imagine was an overstimulating event in a classroom, but I haven't noticed the courtyard used as a recreational, learning, or meditative space.”

Head Start educators requested conversion of the sandbox to a green space, as the sand gets extremely hot and the area is unshaded. All respondents indicated a strong interest in fruit orchards and school gardens for hands-on learning, mental & emotional benefits, and for community building.

Based on this feedback, the project objectives include expanding the tree canopy cover & providing long term shade, and reducing extreme heat. An outdoor learning center will be designed including a log circle & community garden. Staff, students, & residents will be invited to participate in this greening project. Additional benefits from the trees include reducing air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, high wind conditions, and producing fruit for consumption.

The project will benefit the community by providing economic, environmental, mental, physical, & social benefits to school staff, students, & families. Students and the community will provide authentic input for the long-term success of the project. Community engagement will be included in planning, construction, & long-term maintenance. Finally, robust educational programs developed by the SCCOE, Our City Forest, and site educators, will enhance the project via specialized curriculum with hands-on learning and environmental education.

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