SUBMITTED TO THE
COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT
SEPTEMBER 23, 2016
RIDGE LANE COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT

SUMMARY

Ridge Lane is an undeveloped “orphan” public right-of-way between what were two early San Francisco development projects: San Miguel City and the Railroad Homestead Association development. Eventually these areas became part of what we now call the Ingleside District.

For generations Ridge Lane has been a convenient “cut” for locals to make their way down from Lakeview Street to San Jose Boulevard and transit into the City - in the past, via several train lines and more recently through to the Balboa BART and Muni stations. But the Ridge Lane cut is also a blighted and neglected right-of-way, dangerous at night and especially treacherous in bad weather.

A few years ago, a group of Ridge Lane neighbors organized themselves with the assistance of the San Francisco Parks Alliance (Parks Alliance) and formed the non-profit Ridge Lane Neighbors (RLN). The goal of RLN is to promote community cohesion by renovating, improving and beautifying Ridge Lane from Josiah Street down to San Jose Boulevard. RLN is dedicated to making Ridge Lane into a safe, attractive and vibrant new public space and right-of-way.

After years of community meetings, clean-up efforts and work with the Parks Alliance and SF Public Works, on June 18, 2016, RLN held the grand opening ceremonies for the first completed phase of what will be a five-phase project culminating with a stairway path from San Miguel Street to San Jose Boulevard.

After the completion of Phase One, RLN has turned its attention to the next phases of the project. Originally, the expectation was that RLN would move incrementally and only take on each phase as a separate project over the course of many years. But in a meeting with Mohammed Nuru, Director of SF Public Works, RLN was encouraged to think more ambitiously: We want to complete the remaining Ridge Lane project as a whole from Margaret Street to San Jose Boulevard within the next two years. For purpose of the present grant request we are focusing on Parcel Three and Four, the path from Majestic/Tara (Parcel 3) to Caine/San Miguel (Parcel 4).

CAPACITY

RLN demonstrated its ability to complete and sustain the envisioned project as evidenced by the successful completion of the project’s first phase. The same committed and growing group of RLN volunteers and its nationally recognized design team of Nahal Sohbati and Eric Arneson, as well as our Parks Alliance and SF Public Works partners, will be engaged in the project with us to fine tune our site plan, develop working drawings, and manage construction.
RLN's experience with the first phase showed that regular communication with our fellow neighbors is critical to our success. A core group of RLN members act as a steering committee for the project as a whole, interfacing with our elected officials, design team, Parks Alliance and SF Public Works personnel. Regularly scheduled monthly meetings ensure transparency in our decision making and the assignment of various RLN volunteer tasks for project components such as developing a project budget, seeking and applying for grant funds, coordinating construction, to ongoing maintenance and neighborhood outreach. The RLN website provides regularly updated information, from what we've been during our nearly six years of existence to where we're going tomorrow.

The resources RLN brings to the project are significant. Our administrative infrastructure is in place and effectively functioning. We currently have funding for our project from Supervisor Avalos' office and a commitment from SF Public Works director Mohammed Nuru to assist us in seeing the project through to its full vision. RLN regularly applies for other grants as opportunities arise. With a design already in place and approved by SF Public Works, we believe we can scale our project to the funds available.

RLN is rich in volunteer talent. Leads for the project are Scott F. Kauffman, a criminal defense attorney with the California Appellate Project, Warren Longmire, a senior manager with Apple, Inc., and Robert Muehlbauer, retired Neighborhood Housing and Improvement Manager for San Mateo County. Together, with other long committed members of RLN, they will coordinate project activities with our various partners. Drawing upon the skills of other RLN volunteers with backgrounds in law, local government management, small business, technology industries, public library systems, and non-profit administration guarantee effective management and completion of the project. Biographies of the full steering committee are enclosed in the attached appendix.

COMMUNITY NEED

Safe, Convenient Access to Balboa Park Transit Hub

Balboa Park is a major transit hub. It’s one of the busiest stations in the BART system and serves as an intermodal hub for many other transit lines: the J, K, and M Muni rail lines plus many bus lines.

For pedestrians, Ridge Lane provides a convenient and potentially pleasant route to the hub. The lane is heavily used during rush hours (with much of the foot traffic bound for transit). Because of the dead-end streets of Caine and San Miguel (connected only by the Lane), the Lane is a critical shortcut that saves approximately 10-12 minutes for pedestrians coming down from Merced Heights. A recent death has called attention to the dangerous conditions for pedestrians on San Jose Avenue, so a safer pedestrian route to BART is very important.
Recreation

Ingleside and the area around Ridge Lane in particular offer few recreational options. In fact, there are no city parks in the Ingleside district, which is home to over 9,400 residents (2010 Census). Connecting and improving all the segments of Ridge Lane will provide a much-needed space for recreation: strolling, dog-walking, enjoying nature, butterfly habitat and the stunning views.

Safety

The community needs a safer Ridge Lane. As noted above, the Lane is already highly trafficked. The steep grades of loose dirt and rocks with no steps or support (especially Parcel 4, the stretch between Caine/San Miguel) have caused numerous injuries due to people stumbling and falling down the hill or onto rock outcroppings. Also, there is no lighting (except on the first completed segment). Lighting creates a feeling of safety and is an impediment to crime.

Beauty

Ridge Lane offers abundant potential to give all San Franciscans a pleasant place to enjoy the natural and urban beauty of our magnificent city. The views are breathtaking, and there is abundant wildlife (flowers, bees, butterflies, many species of birds including hawks). On the unimproved sections, unfortunately, there is frequent dumping of garbage, clothes, paint cans, and other household junk. However, on the improved segment of Ridge Lane, we have not seen such disrespect. This leads us to believe that improving the thoroughfare will discourage dumping and vandalism by instilling community pride in the space. In summary, by creating a safe, pleasant space to enjoy the inherent beauty of Ridge Lane, the project will represent significant improvement in quality of life for the neighborhood.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The process of organizing, implementing and completing the first phase of the Ridge Lane project has built significant long lasting ties between neighbors and other members of the community. Regular monthly meetings are attended by a core group of about ten neighbors and frequently have many additional neighbors who are very interested in the project but cannot attend the meeting on a regular basis. RLN has sponsored several community work days which have drawn many neighbors to assist in cleanup and maintenance of the trail. With the completion of the first section, a new and vital area has been created where neighbors can meet and admire the community’s effort.

The work completed so far has been a source of pride for the community. Completion of the project down to San Jose Avenue will be like a small version of the New York’s Highline with the same positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Over the course of the
project RLN plans to conduct a series of clean-up, work and fundraising events to build community involvement and investment in the project.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Neighbors have and will continue to play the leading role in the design and implementation of this project. From the beginning, this has been a community led, volunteer effort. RLN has regular monthly meetings to discuss the status of and make decisions on various aspects of the project. The Steering Committee meets more often as needed to address time sensitive issues.

In order to attract diverse attendance, our meetings are announced on our website, via our email list, and are posted on the community board located on Ridge Lane. We encourage community participation largely by word of mouth, distributing flyers door-to-door, and other direct contact with fellow residents. The completion of Phase One has generated increased interest in the project and has provided a location for spontaneous conversations where we can promote the Phase Two, Parcel Four.

To assure broad input on the design of Phase One of this project, RLN held public meetings devoted to gathering general ideas and suggestions. Based on these ideas our architectural-environmental designers, Nahal and Eric, rendered detailed design drawings in coordination and with oversight by planners in the SF Public Works. We then held community meetings to provide feedback on and refine details of that initial design. This process is now complete and we have approved design plans for the balance of the project.

RLN maintains a list of members of the group and circulates a sign-in sheet at all meetings, for which detailed minutes are written and posted on our website. Regarding communication, people can opt-in to receive emails. Our website (https://ridgelaneneighbors.org/) and Facebook group are public. Tracking participation at larger events such as block clean-up days and our Phase One celebration has been a more causal head-count.

This project is a grassroots effort and community effort is crucial. Without the involvement of neighbors, there would be no Ridge Lane improvements.

**DESIGN AND IMPACT**

The proposed design focuses heavily on the needs of the neighbors to have a safe and navigable path with a strong sense of neighborhood identity replacing what is now a hazardous and derelict trail. This has been accomplished by creating a flexible design module that could be adapted to the unique characteristics of each parcel. The arrangement of the path has a clear line of sight for the entire length of each parcel ensuring visibility for better safety while also providing visual interest with its meandering arrangement of pavement. To ensure safety during the night automatic solar powered bollards illuminate
the path. Each parcel entrance will have clearly labeled and attractive signage crediting the various city agencies and persons instrumental in making the project a success, including Lanita Hernandez of the CCG, Mohammed Nura of SF Public Works, and Supervisors John Avalos and Ahsha Safaia.

The design preserves and enhances the existing views by using low planting where views should be preserved. Gabion benches are strategically placed to provide short term seating areas along the path for users to have a moment of rest or a brief conversation with fellow neighbors. Ridge Lane’s south facing orientation and geological characteristics make it an ideal location for butterfly habitat, especially during their mating season. In particular, we hope to make Ridge Lane a new and thriving habitat for the California Pipevine Swallowtail, a magnificent blue butterfly that lives exclusively on the California Pipevine plant. With the help of Tim Wong, we have already planted several California Pipevine plants on Parcel 1. (See, http://inhabitat.com/san-francisco-man-singlehandedly-revived-a-rare-butterfly-species-in-his-own-backyard/) The presence of this habitat serves as the inspiration for the design of the pathway, which mimics the venation patterns found in butterfly wings called Voronoi. This design allows for a wide range of spatial flexibility while maintaining its design integrity throughout the five parcels. The importance of the butterfly habitat is also reflected in the plant palette, which has been carefully created to support butterfly populations throughout the FIVE parcels. The increased population of these butterfly habitats will allow for educational opportunities for children and adults and brings a unique identity to Ridge Lane.

The rocky characteristic of the site is preserved by using floating walkways where bedrock is exposed. This not only retains the site character but also reduces the cost for excavation and concrete construction.

This proposed design for Ridge Lane will serve as a safe and enjoyable neighborhood link for generations to come while also magnifying the quality of life for all of its inhabitants and visitors. The improvement will instill ownership and pride for the neighbors who have and will use this future linear green space.

**UNIQUENESS**

Ridge Lane is an historical anomaly from San Francisco’s past. The area that became the Ingleside District originated from small housing developments originally constructed as inexpensive housing for local railroad workers in the southern outreaches of San Francisco. The developments, primarily San Miguel City and the Railroad Homestead Association project, were not coordinated and consequently there was a gap between the housing developments that became known as Ridge Lane. This also accounts
for the strange jog of the streets between Howth/Josiah, Margaret/Louisburg, and Majestic/Tara.

The Ridge Lane right-of-way is a unique parcel of land that follows the eastern geological spine of Merced Heights. It is approximately a quarter mile in length and is composed of five separate parcels separated by city streets. All parcels have easterly views, southern sun exposure and are protected from direct ocean winds by Merced Heights. These characteristics make Ridge Lane a unique and valuable location for a butterfly mating habitat called “hill topping.”

In addition to being geologically and historically unique, Ridge Lane also provides a spectacular and efficient path for Ingleside residents to transit from the top of the hill down to the Balboa Park transportation station.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

The stakeholders in the development and beautification of Ridge Lane are:

- Ingleside Heights/Columbia Heights homeowners and renters: residents who live close to or adjacent to recently completed Parcel One, who enjoy the newly created landscaping, benches and solar lights and are looking forward to completion of the project.

- Foot traffic: Bart and Muni riders who live in the vicinity, dog owners/walkers, families with children, and seniors, like Geraldine, who has lived adjacent to Ridge Lane for the past 45 years and can now safely use the cement pathway with her walker for her daily exercise (see photo).

- RLN, the group that initiated the project, is comprised of about 20 neighbors from an area of approximately six blocks, between Mount Vernon, Summit, Josiah and San Miguel.

At the opening of Parcel one on June 18th, 75 to 100 neighbors and stakeholders came together to celebrate.

- Former District 11 Supervisor John Avalos, with an initial allocation of $150,000 for the project in 2014

- San Francisco Parks Alliance, fiscal sponsor of RLN, with the full support of Interim CEO Rachel Norton

- SF Public Works, with support from Executive Director, Mohammed Nuru directly, and the Street Parks and Clean Team Program and the Green Benefit District program

• Faculty of the Academy of Art University, Director School of Landscape Architecture Heather Clendenin and supporting staff

• BART president Tom Radulovich, who joined the opening celebration and pledged support for Ridge Lane as a safe walkway to public transportation at the Balboa Park transit station

• San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, with the allocation of a $10,000 water meter grant for Phase One.

• Assembly member Phil Ting, who bestowed a Certificate of Recognition on RLN (see appendix photo)

• Ocean Avenue Association Director, Dan Weaver

• Starbucks Coffee Company, with the participation of company volunteers for planting and clean-up in 2014

SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed Ridge Lane design utilizes materials such as concrete and Forest Stewardship Council-certified Redwood to provide a long lasting and durable design with low maintenance. The design will minimize the amount of excavation where bedrock is exposed by implementing floating wooden walkways and steps thus preserving the natural rocky characteristics of the site and reducing the amount of excavation. Concrete and rock debris that will be excavated from the site will be repurposed by filling the gabion benches and retaining walls. This reduces both the amount of waste to be removed as well as the need for new materials to be brought to the site. A plant palette of native plants and well adapted non-natives provides a combination of ecological value as well as year round seasonal beauty. All the species of plants are drought tolerant and, once established, have minimal maintenance needs. The planting has been carefully chosen to support populations and increase habitat for pollinators particularly for the various species of butterflies who use the site for a mating ground. This design for Ridge Lane will also provide a more convenient and enjoyable path for the neighbors to access local public transportation hubs such as BART and MUNI thus lowering the number of cars on the street.
RLN Steering Committee

Mary Beth D’Alonzo has been an Ingleside resident since 2005 and has gotten to know the neighborhood and many neighbors through her daily dog walks. She is a Conservation Data Manager for The Nature Conservancy and a volunteer with the Humane Society of the United States. She has been involved with RLN since shortly after it formed.

Scott F. Kauffman is a criminal defense attorney and 36 year resident of San Francisco. He moved with his wife, Bicka Barlow, to their Howth Street home in 2004. After seeing a poster on Ridge Lane one day, Scott got involved with RLN in 2015. He and his son, Levi, help tend to Parcel 1.

Warren Longmire, PhD is a Senior Manager at Apple University, an internal education group at Apple, Inc. focusing on management, leadership, and culture. He manages a team of producers who create content for the University’s curriculum. His work background includes education, HR, and project management. He volunteers with Sundance Saloon, the Bay Area’s LGBT country-western dance association, and is a longtime member of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. He walks Ridge Lane every day on the way to BART and has lived on Caine Avenue for eight years.

Robert Muehlbauer moved to San Francisco in 1974 to attend San Francisco State University where he received a degree in urban studies and social work education. He has been actively involved in community development for over 30 years in public administration and non-profit management building, preserving and restoring affordable housing. Now semi-retired, he currently sits on two Board of Supervisors appointed citizens advisory committees, the Balboa Park Station CAC and the Balboa Reservoir CAC, and is active in a number of other local community development initiatives. Like his spouse Moneka, he is one of the founding members of Ridge Lane Neighbors.

Patricia Ris has been a resident of 24 Josiah Avenue for the past 23 years. She and her husband raised their two children here and the family walks their dog each day on Ridge Lane, which faces the house. She joined Ridge Lane neighbors in March 2013, and has been a regular participant in the steering committee and clean up days. She has taken a leadership role during the completion of and it festive opening of parcel one (6/18/16). She is co-caretaker of parcel one with responsibilities of watering, general maintenance, clean-up, and signage board updating.

Moneka Urbanske is a 38 year resident of San Francisco. She attended San Francisco State University where she received a degree in business administration and accounting. She is a California licensed CPA, and over the course of her career has worked in accounting and audit for firms such as Bank of America, KPMG and SLD. Now partially retired, she provides consulting and accounting services for local small businesses. Moneka has lived a
half a block off ridge land for 26 years. She has used the lane for access to BART to commute downtown, to walk her daughters to Balboa Park to play, and more recently, with her husband to shop and dine on Ocean Avenue. She is one of the founding members of Ridge Lane Neighbors.

Barbara Vander Borght has been a resident/homeowner on Caine Avenue since 1990. She worked as a children’s librarian for SF Public Library for 33 1/2 years until her retirement in 2012. She spent half her career in public service at various neighborhood libraries, and the other half in an administrative position coordinating programming for children’s services system wide. She has been involved with Ridge Lane Neighbors since it was starting up, and was previously involved with another neighborhood action group here in the early 1990’s. She serves as the Recording Secretary for RLN, and participates in other ways as well.

Lynn Yuan: I am Chinese and have been in the USA for more than 25 years. I love volunteer work and have been helping many people. For example, when I was living in one Chinatown apartment more than 10 years, my home was like the neighbor’s service center since most of them old or newcomers don’t know English. Even my English was not that good at that time, but I still tried my best eg. made emergency call, read letters, filled out application, baby sited etc. I did have a great time with them since we were like living in a big family.

I have been in living at Caine Ave for about 6 years and have been in the community for more than 4 years or say since the community started. I saw Warren kept cleaning up all dirt and motivated me to join him. I still remember the first meeting just two of us: Lynn & Warren at the Caine Ave & RLN. I could not believe what we have been accomplished.

RLN Design Team

Eric Arneson is an Academy of Art University Alumni and practicing landscape design professional in San Francisco. Arneson has over 2 years of design experience within the Bay area ranging from residential to large scale parks and habitat restoration projects. He has a strong background in horticultural knowledge and planting design that allow him to create beautiful, site sensitive and practical plant palettes. Arneson’s has received 2 major awards during his time as a student. Arneson along with his design partner Nahal Sohbati won 7 award medals for their garden “Sublimation” at the 2015 San Francisco Flower & Garden Show. He also received an American Society of Landscape Architects Honor Award for his design of a 100 acre riverfront park in Healdsburg, CA. Arneson will serve as the design support and planting consultant alongside Nahal Sohbati in the process of transforming Ridge Lane.

Nahal Sohbati is a student of Landscape Architecture at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. Sohbati has over 2 years of design experience in San Francisco ranging from residential to community projects. She has a keen eye for design and a strong passion for the community process. In 2015 Nahal in collaboration with Eric Arneson received 7
awards for their garden installation "Sublimation" at the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show. She began the process of designing Ridge Lane in a studio class where the neighbors chose her design to be further developed. Sohbati has since been involved along every step of the development of Ridge Lane from monthly meetings to design and construction observation of the first parcel completed in June 2016. Nahal will continue to provide her passion, support and design skills to help the ridge lane neighbors realize their dream for Ridge Lane.

**FIVE YEAR MAINTENANCE PLAN**

The improvement of Ridge Lane will occur in five sections, the first of which, between Howth St. and Margaret, is completed. Neighbors adjacent to the five parcels have agreed to take on responsibility for maintenance and care of the parcels as follows:

- Parcel 1: Patricia Ris & Scott F. Kauffman (currently watering and weeding site)
- Parcel 2: Moneka & Robert Muehlbauer
- Parcel 3: Barbara Vander Borght & Lynn Yuan
- Parcel 4: Warren Longmire & Mary Beth D’Alonso

**VENDOR LIST:**
We plan to continue to work with the same vendors on parcel 3 and 4 that we successfully worked with on parcel 1.

**Design:** Nahal Sohbati and Eric Arneson, freelance

**Construction:** Suzanne Mendoza, Catmex

**Irrigation:** Tom Brennan, Urban Farmer Store.
RIDGE LANE NEIGHBORS

Recognizing the Ridge Lane Neighbors on the occasion of the ribbon cutting for the revitalized Ridge Lane. Your dedicated collaboration as neighbors in creating this valuable asset to the greater OMI community is commendable.

PHILIP Y. TING
Assemblymember, 19th District
Presented June 18th, 2016
FUTURE OF RIDGE LANE

RIDGE LANE PARCEL 1 BEFORE

RIDGE LANE PARCEL 1 COMPLETED

RIDGE LANE PARCEL 2 EXISTING

RIDGE LANE PARCEL 2 PROPOSED

Ridge Lane
Ridge Lane
## Work Plan Form

Follow directions at top of each column. Complete a row for all milestones (i.e. hiring staff, purchasing equipment, holding events). Add additional sheets as necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>End date</th>
<th>Lead position</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>3/01/17</td>
<td>9/31/18</td>
<td>Scott F. Kauffman &amp; RLN Steering Committee/SF Parks Alliance</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>On time, on budget project delivery</td>
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<td>12/31/17</td>
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<td>Clean up the Ridge and generate community investment</td>
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<td>Site preparation: removal of pest/invasive species/encroaching hedges/debris</td>
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<td>6/15/17</td>
<td>Catamex &amp; RLN Steering Committee</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>Prep site for further construction</td>
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## Community Challenge Grant Program

### Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Responsible Committee</th>
<th>Budget Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Installation of irrigation</td>
<td>5/01/17</td>
<td>6/15/17</td>
<td>Catamex &amp; RLN Steering Committee</td>
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<td>Allows for long term maintenance of greenscape</td>
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<td>Hardscaping Improvements: concrete Pathway; gabion seating; rock prep</td>
<td>6/15/17</td>
<td>10/15/17</td>
<td>Catamex &amp; RLN Steering Committee</td>
<td>$57,900</td>
<td>Infrastructure for path from Caine to San Miguel St.</td>
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<td>Stairway: decking &amp; stair redwood/metal framing pile drive into rock; stair rails and landing</td>
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<td>01/01/18</td>
<td>Catamex &amp; RLN Steering Committee</td>
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<td>Finish stairway from Caine to San Miguel</td>
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<td>Soil prep and greenscape installation; mulch cover;</td>
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<td>03/01/18</td>
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<td>Solar Lighting including concrete pads/signage</td>
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<td>03/01/18</td>
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<td>Safety lighting for steep grade</td>
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**Sub-Total** | $195,400 |
**SF Parks Alliance Fee** | $8,100 |
**Total** | **$203,500** |
## Community Challenge Grant Program

### Application

#### Project Budget Form

**Applicant Name:** Ridge Lane Neighbors

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<th>Total Project Cost:</th>
<th>Total CCG Request:</th>
<th>Total Amount of Match:</th>
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<td>Large Scale</td>
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**Match = 21% of total CCG Request**

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<th>Total Project Cost</th>
<th>CCG Request</th>
<th>What is the Match Amount?</th>
<th>Is Match In-kind or Cash?</th>
<th>Is Match Committed or Pending?</th>
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<td>In-kind volunteer labor/fund raising</td>
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**Total Direct Expenses**  

$ 203,500  
$190,000  
$13,500  
$