

September 14, 2021
Ventura County Board of
Supervisors



Proposed Revisions to Planning Division's Tree Mitigation Fund Distribution Program

**Resource Management Agency, Planning Division
Owen Deutsch, Project Planner**



1. Background
2. Previously Awarded Projects
3. Proposed Program Revisions
4. Current Funding and Next Steps
5. CEQA Compliance and Recommended Actions

Background



- County Tree Protection Ordinance and Guidelines adopted in 1992- offsets required for altering or removing Protected Trees
- **Tree Protection Ordinance:** “Ventura County recognizes that trees contribute significantly to the County’s unique aesthetic, biological, cultural, and historical environment as well as its air quality” (Sec. 8107-25.1)
- Tree Mitigation Fund Distribution Program approved by your Board on December 17, 2013
- **General Plan Policy COS-1.15 (Countywide Tree Planting):** “The County shall establish and support a countywide target for the County, cities in Ventura County, agencies, organizations, businesses, and citizens to plant two million trees throughout the County by 2040.”
- **General Plan/Climate Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Program COS-H (County Tree Planting Program):** “The County shall plant at least one thousand trees annually.” CEO Sustainability Division and sustainability committee will provide oversight of CAP implementation programs.

Current Distribution Program



- Projects shall include the planting and maintenance of newly planted trees
- Eligible locations: Within County, on land publicly-owned, owned by conservation agency, or protected by conservation easement (on land suitable for long-term survival of trees)
- Eligible organizations: Non-profit conservation organizations and public agencies based in County
- Project reporting: Tree Maintenance and Monitoring Plan, with regular progress reports
- Project selection:
 - # Trees/Funding
 - Quality of proposal and proposed maintenance program
 - Experience and qualifications of applicant/staff
 - Additional public benefits

Overview of Awarded Projects



A. Ventura Land Trust

Big Rock Preserve

B. County Parks

Dennison Park

Steckel Park

C. Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

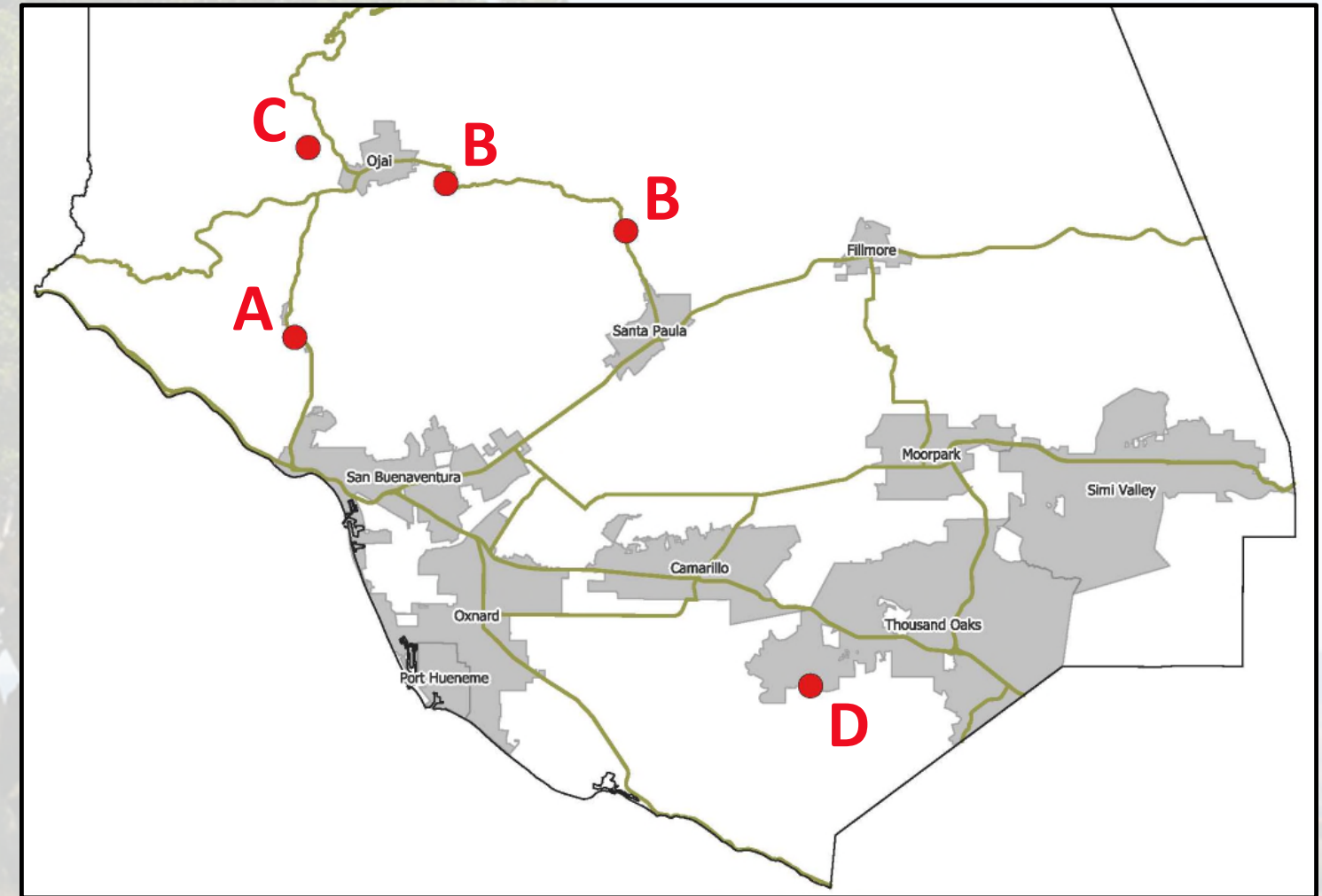
Ventura River Preserve

D. Tree People

Potrero Creek in Rancho

Sierra Vista Park

- **\$470,000** in Tree Mitigation Fund (2014)
- **\$422,000** made available for distribution (remainder reserved for admin. costs)
- **\$365,000** awarded



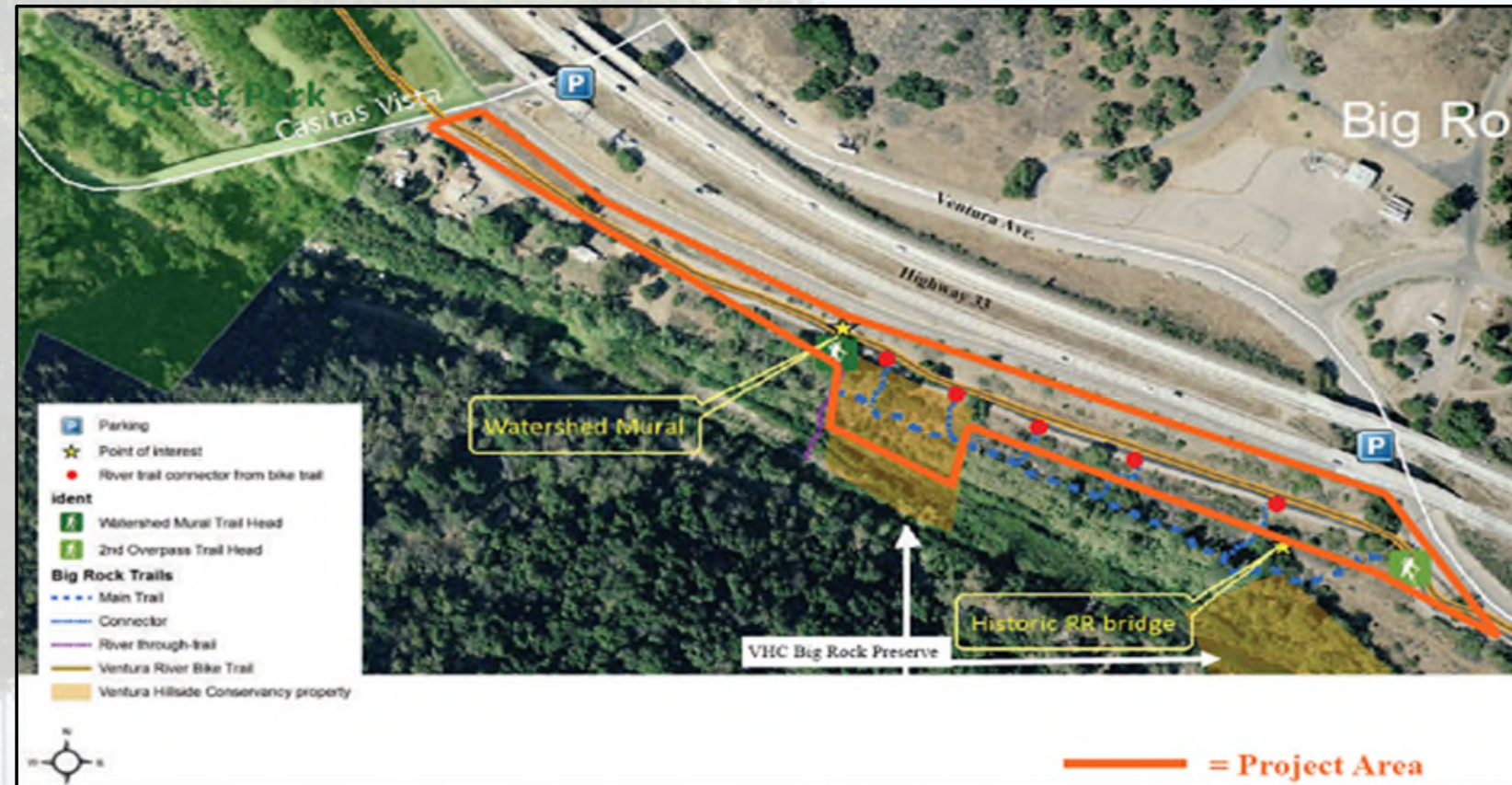
Awarded Projects



Ventura Land Trust

Big Rock Preserve

- \$97,695 awarded (\$9,710 matched)
- 886 trees planted (465 + 421 replacement trees)
- Native species restoration



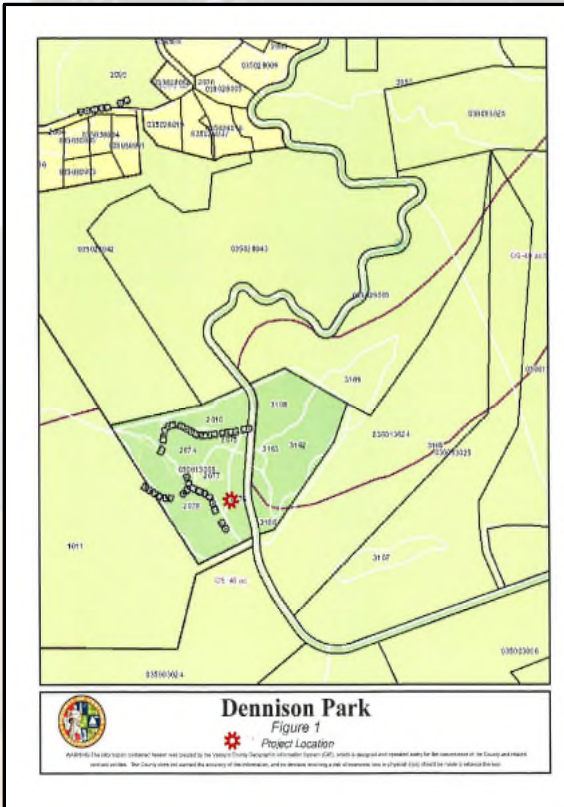
Awarded Projects



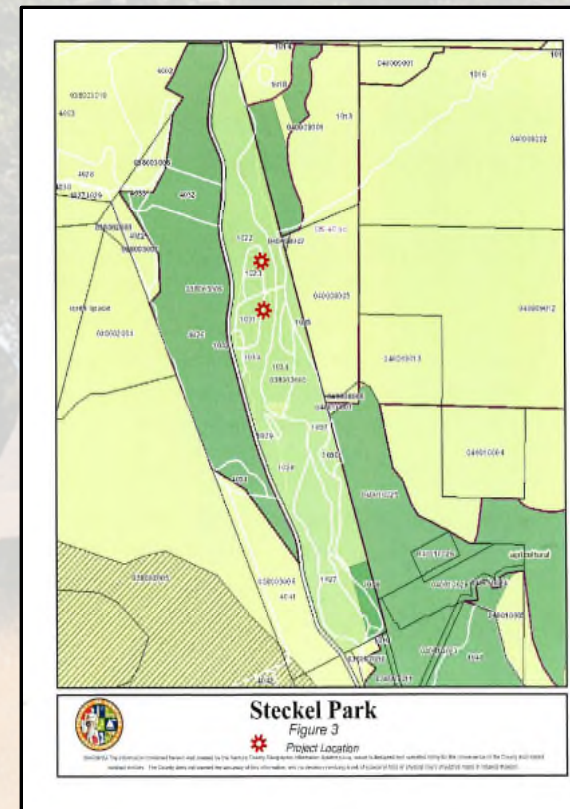
County Parks

- \$74,000 awarded
- Woodland habitat restoration

Dennison Park
23 trees planted



Steckel Park
115 trees planted



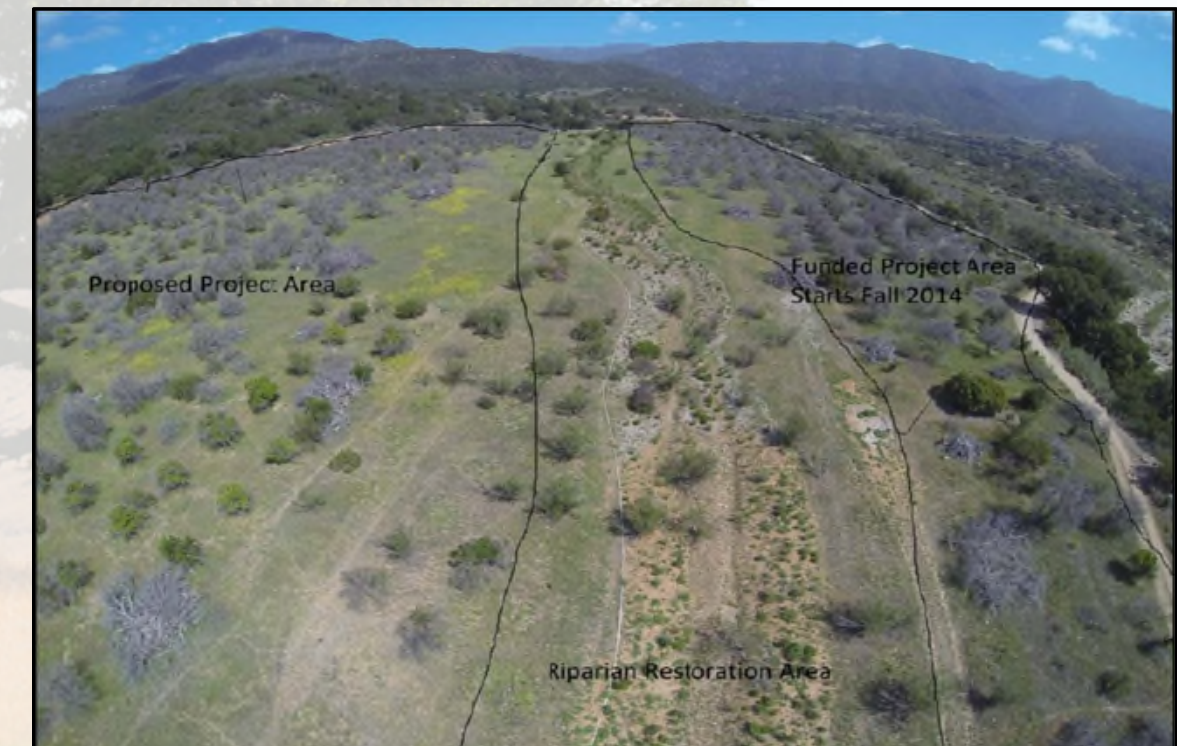
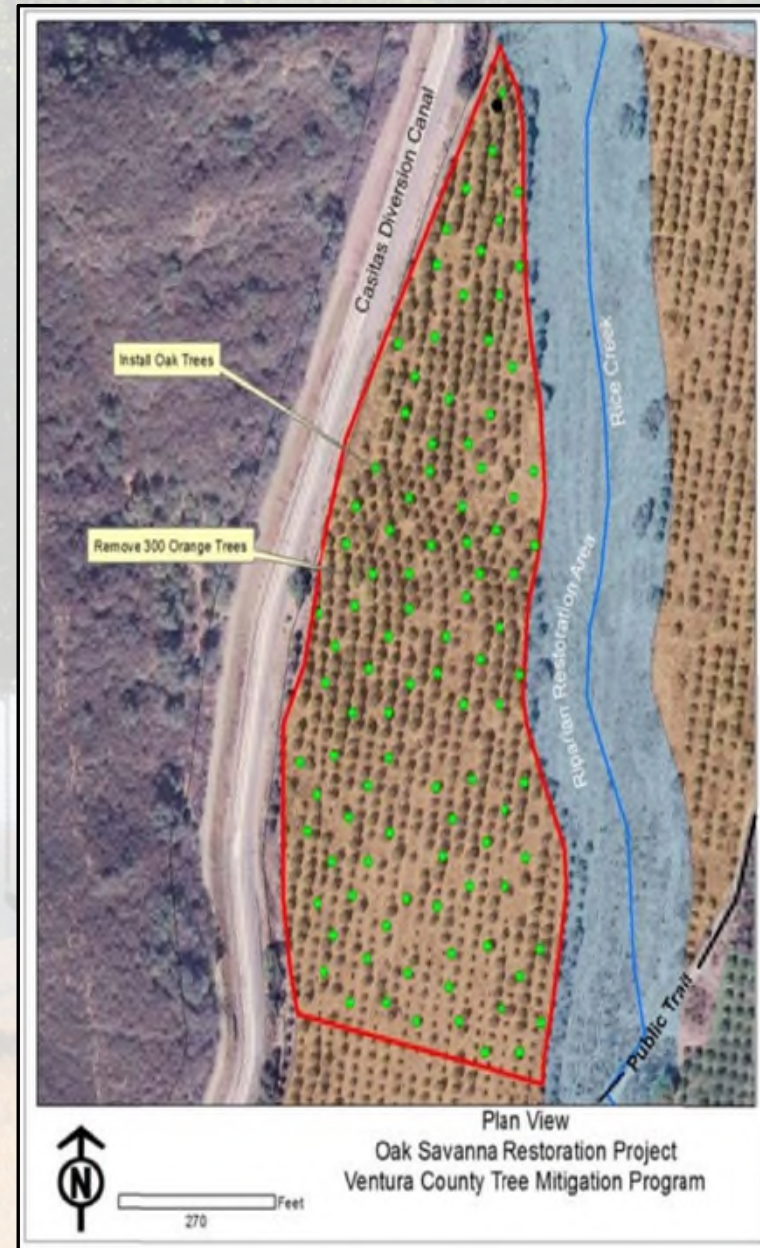
Awarded Projects



Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

Ventura River Preserve

- \$97,977 awarded
- 430 trees planted (228 + 202 replacement)
- Oak savannah and other habitat restoration



Awarded Projects



Tree People

Potrero Creek in Rancho Sierra Vista Park

- \$94,468 awarded (\$43,170 matching)
- 1,450 trees planted (800 surviving)
- Additional planting, invasive species removal



Awarded Projects



Awarded Organization	Amount Awarded ¹	Amount Reimbursed	Trees Planted	Trees Surviving	Cost per Planted Tree	Cost per Surviving Tree	Project Admin. Costs
Ventura Land Trust	\$97,695	\$97,403	886	282 (29%) ²	\$109.94	\$345.40	\$9,732 (10%)
County Parks	\$74,000	\$61,360	138	112 (81%)	\$444.64	\$547.86	\$14,241 (19%)
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy	\$98,997	\$98,782	430	202 (89%) ²	\$229.73	\$490.08	\$10,774 (11%)
Tree People	\$94,468	\$94,468	1,450	800 (55%)	\$65.15	\$118.09	\$28,748 (30%)
Total	\$365,160	\$352,013	2,702	1,396 (52%)	\$130.28	\$252.16	\$63,495 (18%)

1. Does not include matching funds

2. Surviving trees are replacement trees planted after Thomas Fire

Proposed Program Revisions



Eligibility/Selection Criteria

- County-owned properties within incorporated areas will be eligible for funding
- An organization is no longer required to have membership of at least 500 individuals or businesses, but must have owned or managed natural resource property for at least three years
- Selection criteria for project proposals will include points for demonstration of water availability (esp. reclaimed water)

Project Initiation/Monitoring

- All trees must be planted within the first year of a project
- The minimum monitoring period will be reduced from seven to five years

Proposed Program Revisions



- Existing program awards 30 of 100 selection points to proposed projects which include: public access, oak woodland restoration, or other habitat preservation and/or restoration benefits
- County Policy (April 27, 2021): Protect Monarch Butterfly Overwintering Groves and Support Planting of Native Milkweed and Pollinator-Friendly Plants on County Property Where Practicable
- **Monarch butterfly habitat restoration** will be specifically encouraged for the next distribution round
- For monarch habitat restoration: restoration site must be suitable, and a habitat assessment and restoration plan must be conducted

Proposed Program Revisions



- Protected Tree species other than oaks and sycamores may be planted outside Scenic Resource Protection Overlay zones



Big Cone Douglas Fir (Ojai)



California walnut



Juniper



Cottonwood

Proposed Program Revisions



- Maximum grant awards will be increased from \$99,000 to \$199,000
- Administrative costs will be capped at 10%
- A new standardized, online form was developed for organizations to submit their invoices and status reports

Home Building Code Compliance Fire **Planning** Public Works HHVC more ▾

Create an Application Check/Research Permits

Record TM21-0001:
Tree Mitigation Fund
Record Status: Accepted

[Add to cart](#)
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Record Info ▾ Payments ▾

Work Location

800 VICTORIA
VENTURA CA 93009

Record Details

Applicant:
Owen Deutsch
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA, 93009-1740
Work Phone: 8054777164
Mobile Phone: 8080777164
owen.deutsch@ventura.org

▼ **More Details**

▣ **Application Information**
▣ **Application Information Table**

INVOICE/ACTIVITIES	
Activity Name:	planting
Costs Incurred since last invoice:	10000
Total cost incurred to date:	10000
Task Description:	planting

TREE DATA

Tree / Group #:	1
# Trees:	50
Species:	oak
Planting Area:	main
Date Planted:	08/01/2021
Date of Last Inspection:	08/05/2021
Number Surviving:	40
Height (ft):	4.5
Overall Health:	4

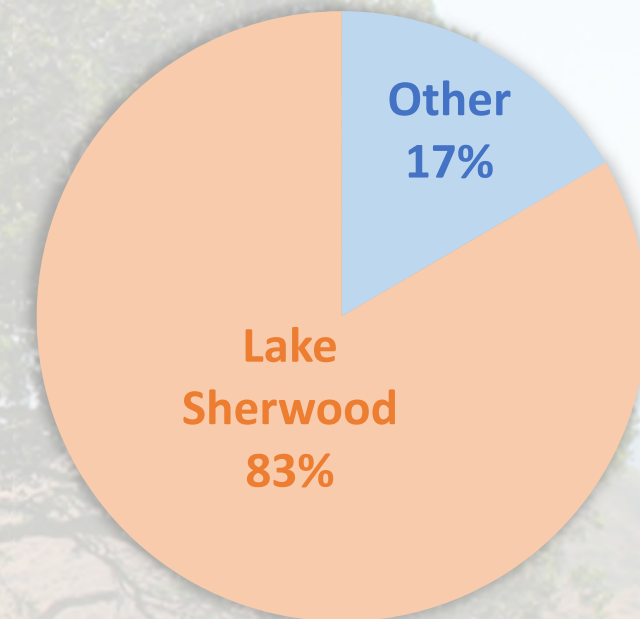
▣ **Parcel Information**

Current Funding



- Expected distribution amount: \$928,000
(decrease in staff admin. costs: 12% to 5%)
- Expected Timeline: Funding Notice of Availability to be distributed in coming months; contracts executed in early 2022
- Program status will be reported on through General Plan Annual Reports

FUND CONTRIBUTIONS (\$958,591)



Exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines:

- Section 15307 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources):
Action taken by a regulatory agency, as authorized by state or local ordinance, “to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.”
- Section 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment):
Action taken by a regulatory agency, as authorized by state or local ordinance, “to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.”

Recommended Actions



- 1. **RECEIVE** staff presentation on the Planning Division's Proposed Tree Mitigation Fund Distribution Program;
- 2. **DETERMINE** that the proposed revisions to the Tree Mitigation Fund Distribution Program and implementation of the program as set forth in this Board letter are categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to sections 15307 and 15308 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, and that no unusual circumstance or other exceptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 preclude the applicability of these categorical exemptions;
- 3. **APPROVE** the Planning Division's proposed revisions to the Tree Mitigation Fund Distribution Program as set forth in this Board letter;
- 4. **AUTHORIZE** the RMA Purchasing Agent to execute contracts for each program award on a form approved by County Counsel; and
- 5. **AUTHORIZE** the Auditor-Controller to process the accounting transactions necessary to establish appropriations and unanticipated revenue as follows (requires 4/5th vote):

INCREASE	2910-2911	Services and Supplies	\$928,000
INCREASE	2910-2911	Licenses, Permits and Franchises	\$928,000



Questions?