



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Board of Supervisors
Department No.: 011
Agenda Date: February 3, 2026
Placement: Departmental Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: Choose an item.
If Yes, date from: <Insert Date>
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: 1st District Supervisor Roy Lee
Contact: Wade Stewart Cowper email: wcowper@countyofsb.org
SUBJECT: Funding Agreement with the City of Carpinteria for Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve Improvements Project

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: CEO Budget

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute an Agreement with the City of Carpinteria (Attachment A) to provide funding to the City in the amount of \$800,000 to support improvements, planning, habitat restoration, public access, and stewardship activities at the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve and related bluff properties;
- b) Approve Budget Revision Request No. 0010932 to establish appropriations of \$200,000 in the General County Programs General Fund for Services and Supplies funded by release of Committed Emerging Issues fund balance;
- c) Find that the project provides a community benefit that meets the social needs of the County, including public health, safety, and recreational access; and
- d) Determine that the recommended actions are organizational or administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and are therefore not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5).

Summary Text:

The First District requests approval of a funding agreement with the City of Carpinteria (“City”) to support multi-year improvements at the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve, Rincon Bluffs Preserve, and related coastal open space areas.

This \$800,000 funding will help advance public access, trail improvements, habitat restoration, and long-term stewardship for these significant coastal resources. The funding agreement establishes eligible uses of the funds, reporting requirements, and coordination mechanisms to ensure the funds are used consistent with conservation goals and community priorities. The funding comes from the South County Parks, Trails, and Open Space Set-Aside that the Board established in Fiscal Year 2021-22.

Approval of this item will help accelerate long-planned improvements to one of the most valued coastal open spaces in Santa Barbara County.

Discussion:

The Carpinteria Bluffs are a regionally significant stretch of protected coastal bluff lands that serve residents throughout Santa Barbara County. This area includes the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve and the Rincon Bluffs Preserve, which are owned and managed by the City of Carpinteria, as well as the Rincon Gateway property, owned by The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. Collectively, these open spaces provide opportunities for public recreation, habitat conservation, coastal access, and the development of future segments of the California Coastal Trail.

The City of Carpinteria is undertaking a comprehensive, multi-phase planning and improvement effort across the Bluffs to enhance public access, restore sensitive habitats, and improve long-term management of the area. Funding from the County will assist in repairing and rehabilitating existing trails, removing invasive plant species, restoring native vegetation, constructing ADA-accessible trail segments, and implementing public access improvements such as parking, restrooms, and interpretive features. It will also support necessary planning and permitting activities, including compliance with CEQA and the California Coastal Act, as well as preliminary engineering and site assessments and the development of long-term stewardship and maintenance strategies.

Pursuant to the Agreement, the County’s contribution of \$800,000 will be distributed in annual installments of up to \$200,000 beginning May 1, 2026. Each disbursement will require a written request from the City accompanied by a progress report and a summary of expenditures. The City will coordinate its work with the Carpinteria Open Space Management Advisory Board to ensure consistency with conservation and open space management goals. Activities that fall under the terms of existing conservation easements will be reviewed in collaboration with The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County.

This grant shall reinvigorate the partnership between the County, the City of Carpinteria, and regional conservation organizations, while advancing key environmental and recreational priorities for the community.

Background:

Over the last two decades, the Carpinteria Bluffs have become a model of community-driven conservation. Through coordinated efforts between the City, The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, and residents, hundreds of acres of coastal bluff land have been permanently protected.

As visitation has grown, the need for improved trails, ADA-accessible pathways, habitat restoration, and long-term management has become increasingly clear. The City is pursuing a unified vision for the Bluffs that balances public access with ecological protection.

This County grant will support that vision by funding priority improvements and planning work that benefit the entire region. This funding was originally reserved in the FY 2024-25 budget process to help acquire a section of the Carpinteria Bluffs to prevent a large-scale development.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No; recommend approval of Budget Revision Request No. 0010932

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	Total
General Fund	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$800,000
State					
Federal					
Fees					
Total	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$800,000

Special Instructions:

Please provide one executed electronic copy of the agreement to Brittany Odermann, Deputy CEO, bodermann@countyofsb.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Agreement to distribute County Funds for the Carpinteria Bluffs Project

Attachment B – Budget Revision Request No. 0010932

Contact Information:

Wade Stewart Cowper, Chief of Staff

Office of Supervisor Roy Lee

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