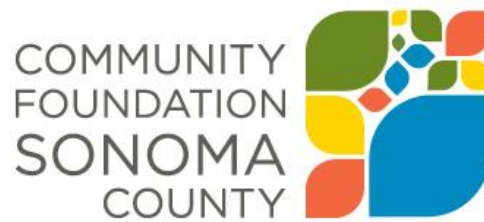




... to protect the land forever



Project to transform two-mile-long vacant Santa Rosa property **Sonoma Land Trust receives \$250,000 Community Foundation** **Sonoma County grant to fund urban greenway project**

(SANTA ROSA, CALIF., August 14, 2017) — Sonoma Land Trust received a \$250,000 grant from Community Foundation Sonoma County in support of the acquisition and transformation of a 47-acre vacant Santa Rosa property into a new urban greenway park and open space called the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway. The grant was made possible through the generous legacy of donors Hazel and Roland Todd.

The property — a two-mile-long corridor between Spring Lake Park and Farmers Lane — is the abandoned Highway 12 freeway right-of-way owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and is currently closed to the public. The Community Foundation grant will support acquisition of the property and augments a \$1 million matching grant from the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

“Sonoma Land Trust recognizes that most Californians live in urban areas with limited access to open space; we are excited to play a part in this one-time opportunity to bring nature within a short walk of many city residents,” says Wendy Eliot, Sonoma Land Trust’s conservation director. “This grant marks a significant step toward making the Greenway vision a reality.”

Developing this property into an urban open space and park will be transformative for the City of Santa Rosa. Proposed features of the Southeast Greenway plan include paths for cyclists and pedestrians along the two-mile corridor, community gardens, pocket parks, art displays, new opportunities for outdoor community gathering, engagement, education and restoration of natural areas. An additional nine acres of the Caltrans property is designated for residential use, including affordable housing and commercial uses.

“Visioning and planning amenities for all Sonoma County residents is a lofty goal and this grant will help the Southeast Greenway Campaign and Sonoma Land Trust in those efforts,” says Thea Hensel, co-chair of the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway Campaign committee.

“This is a tremendous opportunity to create our own ‘Central Park’ in the heart of Santa Rosa and we’re so proud to support Sonoma Land Trust in this effort,” says Elizabeth Brown, president and CEO of

Community Foundation Sonoma County. “With decades of experience in protecting and stewarding land in Sonoma County, the Land Trust is the perfect organization to secure the land for the future.”

The Greenway vision began in 2009 when community members recognized that this vacant property could, one day, be transformed into a greenway for Santa Rosa and formed the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway Campaign. The project is now led by a strategic coalition of agency and nonprofit partners, including the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Regional Parks, LandPaths and the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway Campaign. Once acquired, the property will be owned by the City of Santa Rosa and the Sonoma County Water Agency, and the community will be involved in planning its future.

Community and environmental significance

Instead of a freeway, we have the opportunity to create a two-mile-long greenway in the heart of Santa Rosa. Caltrans is providing until 2020 to raise the funds needed to purchase the property — a chance that won’t come again. The Greenway will offer many environmental and social benefits, providing thousands of city residents with access to a park within a 10-minute walk from their homes. It will connect Santa Rosa’s beloved three-park complex (Spring Lake Regional Park, Howarth City Park and Trione-Annadel State Park) and the Sonoma Valley Trail to nearby diverse, high-density urban communities for the first time, and also provide safe, car-free access to other adjoining pedestrian thoroughfares. The latter include the SMART rail line in downtown Santa Rosa, the Prince Memorial Greenway and West County trails, as well as easy access to nearby schools, workplaces and major shopping centers.

“The Southeast Greenway will be a tremendously valuable recreation and transportation asset for our community and we appreciate the Community Foundation’s recognition of that value,” says Mayor Chris Coursey.

In addition, the Greenway will provide a unique opportunity to restore part of Santa Rosa’s natural world that has been deserted for more than 50 years. Once acquired and designated as the Greenway, plans are to restore the natural flow to the creeks to restore native wildlife habitat.

Project documents for the Greenway, including the proposal as adopted through the City of Santa Rosa’s General Plan Amendment, can be viewed [here](#).

To learn more about the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway or for ways to get involved, visit the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway Campaign website at www.southeastgreenway.org.

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About Sonoma Land Trust

Sonoma Land Trust believes land is the foundation of our economy and our community’s health and well-being. Since 1976, Sonoma Land Trust has protected over 50,000 acres of scenic, natural, agricultural and open land for future generations, and is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. For more information, please visit www.sonomalandtrust.org.

About Community Foundation Sonoma County

Community Foundation Sonoma County is the hub of philanthropy for the county, connecting people, ideas and resources to benefit all who live here. The Community Foundation works with philanthropists to create plans that will make an impact in our community and become part of their family's legacy. Since 1983, Community Foundation Sonoma County has awarded more than \$200 million dollars in grants to nonprofit organizations in Sonoma County and beyond. To learn more about Community Foundation Sonoma County, visit www.sonomacf.org.

About Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway Campaign

The Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway Campaign is a community effort to transform the vacant two-mile corridor of open space connecting Spring Lake Park and Farmers Lane into a vibrant urban greenway that will serve as a strategic link in our regional non-motorized transportation system and improve our quality of life. The Campaign consists of a volunteer steering committee, a circle of advisors and more than 2,000 supporters. For more information, please visit www.southeastgreenway.org.

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