

# RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

## STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of: July 9, 2026

**To:** RBRA Board of Directors

**From:** Brad Gross, Executive Director

**Subject:** Acceptance of grant award from the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) to support eelgrass restoration; Amendment No. 1 to the FY 2026-27 budget to authorize the grant revenue and expenditures.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. 26-11.

**Motion:** Adopt Resolution 26-11 accepting a grant award of \$250,000 from the Marin Community Foundation, and approving fiscal year 2026-27 Budget Amendment No.1 in the amount of \$250,000 in both additional revenue and additional expenditures for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

### BACKGROUND:

RBRA's 2026 Strategic Plan goal of healthy and robust eelgrass beds in Richardson Bay established the objective of restoring 75 acres of eelgrass beds in the bay. The Plan's strategies to achieve this objective are: Follow RBRA's Restoration & Adaptive Management Plan (RAMP) as the guiding direction for collaboratively restoring, monitoring and managing eelgrass; secure and utilize grant funding for the restoration work; and fostering and maintaining partnerships with entities that share eelgrass restoration interests.

Accordingly, in partnership with Coastal Policy Solutions (CPS) and Ulysses Ecosystem Engineering (Ulysses), RBRA applied for and has been awarded a grant from the Marin Community Foundation's FY26 Sea Level Rise Small Grants Pilot Program of its Building Resilient Communities Initiative for the project *Richardson Bay Eelgrass Monitoring – Advanced Methods to Assess Habit Health* to support monitoring, and thereby enhancing, eelgrass restoration in Richardson's Bay.

### DISCUSSION:

The grant will enable use of autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) to survey and map existing eelgrass coverage in the bay's Eelgrass Protection Zone. This will allow RBRA to efficiently and effectively evaluate restoration outcomes from active and forthcoming restoration, as well as identifying priority sites for future eelgrass expansion within Richardson Bay's 75 acres of identified restoration targets. The monitoring data and the resulting improvements on specific restoration locations and methodology also

will place RBRA in a more favorable position when seeking additional grants for future restoration work.

MCF funding will deliver four specific products: (1) a Fall 2026 baseline AUV survey of eelgrass coverage and substrate conditions across the entire Eelgrass Protection Zone at sub-meter resolution using side-scan and multibeam sonar, capturing peak growing-season extent; (2) two follow-up surveys (Spring 2027 and Summer 2027) tracking restoration outcomes from concurrent planting; (3) a habitat suitability map identifying priority restoration sites within Richardson Bay's 75-acre opportunity ranked by expected wave-attenuation benefit to vulnerable shoreline segments; and (4) a final technical report and publicly available dataset.

Eelgrass is among the most underutilized nature-based solutions to sea level rise adaptation tools: mature meadows attenuate wave energy by up to 50%, stabilize sediments, reduce shoreline erosion, and shelter infrastructure during king tides and storms. Restoring and protecting these meadows is a priority defense for the Bay's vulnerable shoreline communities.

Coastal Policy Solutions (CPS) is a co-applicant on the grant and, through a proposed contract amendment with RBRA in a separate agenda item, will provide project management and implementation services. CPS will contract with Ulysses Ecosystem Engineering, Inc. and Marine Taxonomic Services for technical equipment, materials and services.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The grant award is in the amount of \$250,000 over an approximately one-year period, ending June 30, 2027. The proposed FY 2026-27 Budget Amendment No.1 will authorize an increase in both projected revenues as well as expenditure allocation by the amount of the grant. The revenue and expenses will be recorded and tracked in a project fund.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

RBRA plans for the monitoring work funded by the grant to commence in the first quarter of fiscal year 2026-27 and conclude by June 30, 2027. A separate agenda item recommends amending the contract with Coastal Policy Solutions to provide project management and related services to implement the MCF grant.

Attachment 1: MCF Notice of Award

Attachment 2: DRAFT Resolution No. 26-11