West Valley College

May 1, 2020

Megan Dreger, Grants Administrator
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
33 Las Colinas Ln
San Jose, CA 95119

To Whom It May Concern

I wholeheartedly support BAO's Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant application.

Previously, I was at the county of Santa Clara Parks Department for more than 16 years. During my tenure, I served in increasingly responsible positions and became the Park Interpretive Program Coordinator at which time I created and developed the County Parks Docent program to deliver high quality interpretive programs for all ages. In 2012, I started a successful one-year partnership with Dr. Anne Ferguson and Bay Area Older Adults (BAO) to get older adults on our county park trails. Later, I joined Valley Water as the Education and Outreach Program Coordinator and created an educational walking program for BAO. Now I am a faculty member at West Valley College's Park Management Program and am a member of BAO's Board of Advisors.

BAO has a long history of offering high quality, age- and ability-appropriate educational walking programs. They have a tremendous capacity to plan and handle all program logistics including outreach, transportation, educational themes and evaluation for continuous improvement. Their programs grew from 40 seniors in the first few months of working with me to now more than 4,000 seniors who have walked more than 12,000 miles.

In closing, BAO has a unique walking program that is a safe and social way for vulnerable seniors to access our remarkable county and city parks. BAO is one of the most deserving groups that I can think of whom would greatly benefit the community if given Measure Q funding. I hope you will consider supporting their incredible efforts and excellent services they provide to our aging community.

Sincerely,

Heidi McFarland

Heidi McFarland
Full-time Faculty
Park Management Program
West Valley College