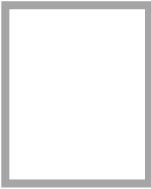


THE GUADALUPE GAZETTE



[Holder Address]  
Address 2  
438 Coleman Ave  
San Jose, CA 95110

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens through education, advocacy and stewardship.

This newsletter is generously supported by



Meet Us at the River Park

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

- **March 24:** Rotary PlayGarden hours will extend to 10am-6:30pm
- **April 4, 5:30pm:** Guadalupe Gardens Prototype Park Community Meeting
- **April 16, 11:30am-1:30pm:** Rhymes & Roses poetry event
- **April 28, 6:00pm:** SJ Mayoral Candidate Forum at SJSU Student Union Theater  
*hosted by: SPUR, GRPC, SJSU, SOMOS Mayfair, SJDA, & Seamless Bay Area*
- **April 30-May 8:** Guadalupe River Art Walk mural festival
- **May 12, 6:00pm:** Columbus Park Reconstruction Community Meeting

PROGRAMS, EDUCATION, & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Historic Orchard Workdays:** 1st Saturday of the month, 9-11:30am
- **Trail Clean Ups:** 1st Wednesday of the month, 9-11am
- **Heritage Rose Garden Workdays:** Every Saturday, 8:30-11:30am
- **Trail Ambassador** recruitment (ongoing)
- **CHIRP** Homeschool programming takes place every Monday (ongoing)
- **Virtual Field Trips** Online field trips are now being offered



Become a Member!

Support programs and initiatives that uplift community through the River Park by joining our membership program!

Visit **grpg.org** to learn more and join.



Towards Our Restoration

This time of year is often defined by the return of buds and blossoms. At the Guadalupe River Park , this season also benchmarks restoration: of our trails, gardens, parks, and community. We are thrilled to share with you stories of community milestones that uplift the work of our neighbors and volunteers to help restore the Guadalupe Gardens and set the foundation for the future of the River Park.

-The Conservancy Staff

Stewardship Metrics	2021	Q1 2022
Number of volunteers	2,012	603
Acres maintained	55	55
Volunteer hours	6,067	1,616
Trail patrols	222	32
Trash bags filled	6,625	169
Pounds of trash removed	199k	5,070
Park features restored	29	11

In This Issue

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2021 Annual Report

Interview with our Historic Orchard Master Gardeners



# Meet our New Board Members and Staff!

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy is thrilled to welcome our new Board of Directors and Staff to our leadership and impact team. We look forward to sharing their talents and passion to help connect communities to nature and each other.



**Niki Jaimes**  
*VAGABOND Marketing*

I am excited to continue to cultivate GRPC’s authentic voice and share it with the world.



**Jared Lewis**  
*San Jose Water Company*

GRPC board service is an opportunity to deepen my commitment to public service while supporting a critical need to revitalize and enhance urban space in Santa Clara County.



**Elizabeth Loretto**  
*Open Space Authority*

I joined the GRPC Board because I want to support spaces and programs that will contribute to the growth and development of the next generation of conservation leaders.



**Scott Miller**  
*Southwest Airlines, SJSU*

This is my opportunity to give back to a City that has given me so much.



**Carina Ruiz-Singh**  
*Deloitte*

The future of work is here and requires better use of public infrastructure to foster a love of nature and a stronger sense of community.



**Kiyomi Yamamoto**  
*Silicon Valley Community Foundation*

I joined the Board to help the GRPC steward the urban-set Guadalupe River Park by prioritizing both our people and the natural environment.



**Denae Carmelino**  
*Education Program Coordinator*

I wanted to work with the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy in order to encourage and empower my community to protect and flourish on our land.



**Lily Lucas**  
*Public Programs Coordinator*

I was excited to work at the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy for the opportunity to educate youth in an outdoor-based classroom.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Marguerite Lee**  
President

**Andrew Sandler**  
Vice President  
**Sheryl Ehrman**  
Secretary  
**Katia Terentyeva**  
Treasurer

**Mark Baginski**  
**Lisa Bankosh**  
**Niki Jaimes**  
**Dan Kennedy**  
**Jared Lewis**  
**Elizabeth Loretto**  
**Scott Miller**  
**Allie Ottoboni**  
**Carina Ruiz Singh**  
**Carl Salas**  
**Kiyomi Yamamoto**

## STAFF

**Jason Su**  
Executive Director  
**Denae Carmelino**  
Education Program Coordinator  
**Sarah Dreitlein**  
Civic Engagement Manager  
**Lily Lucas**  
Public Programs Coordinator  
**Ciana Moreno**  
Communications & Administrative Coordinator  
**Gillian Naegele**  
Volunteer Coordinator  
**Ash Namdar**  
Operations Manager  
**Joe Salvato**  
Deputy Director  
**Mel Sarmento**  
Education Program Manager



## Introducing Our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

San José is a thriving, multi-cultural city that deserves a vibrant River Park threading through its energetic core. For decades, the River Park and Gardens have served as San José’s front yard, welcoming residents and visitors alike with respite, connection, and learning. More than ever before, the River Park presents an opportunity to alleviate the current social, economic, and environmental pressures of our community and region.

In October 2021, with generous support from the Knight Foundation, the Conservancy completed our strategic planning process to guide our impact and focus through the upcoming pivotal years that will shape the way the Guadalupe River Park uplifts our community and connects people to nature and each other. Our strategic focus centers on our ability to build collaborations and coalitions, improve the park user experience, promote civic-ownership of the River Park, and enhance the Conservancy’s ability to provide community leadership.

Our vision and strategic priorities will help sustain this vibrant community resource and ensure that the River Park continues to be a valued jewel at the heart of the Capital of Silicon Valley well into the future. We do not take lightly the complexity of the challenges before us. Our purpose is to be the torchbearer for the vision of our city and commitment of a legacy of supporters to uplift our community through the Guadalupe River Park.

Successfully executing the goals in this plan will require working in concert—staff, board, and partners—to do more than we can do alone. We will grow and build new strength in all aspects of our work—not because we are lacking, but because the need is so great, and the potential is so present.

We are filled with hope and gratitude about our future work, and look forward to walking this journey with you.







## Our Vision - The Front Yard for the Whole City

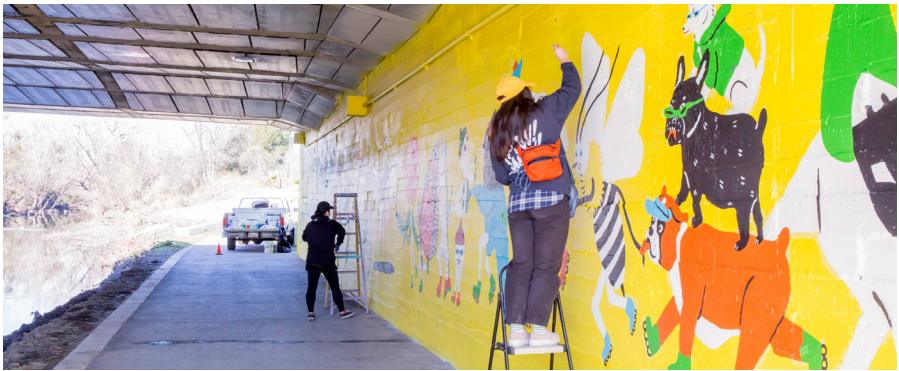
The Guadalupe River Park will enable a vibrant public life built on connecting people to nature and each other. The River Park will be a vehicle to equitably uplift surrounding neighborhoods and become a welcoming, dynamic, and continuous connection along its length, across its banks, and into the fabric of the city. The River Park—grand in scale and ambition—will be an unmistakable testament to San Jose’s ability to come together, live in harmony with nature, and cultivate community.

We define success as using strong connections to address challenges on behalf of the River Park and its constituents.

The Conservancy is for all who engage with the River Park. We connect park stewards, neighbors, public and civic partners, businesses, and users for the benefit of all. Our work centers the River Park, the city, and the community; with the Conservancy as the vessel for leadership.

We work to address the immediate and long-standing challenges facing the River Park. We are the voice of the park itself. We work to ensure it is a clean, functioning, thriving ecosystem that provides a touch of nature amid a vibrant urban landscape. Not all areas of the park currently reach this standard. We have systemic challenges to face that mirror the challenges of our city and region. In coordination with our partners, we will address these challenges with innovation, compassion, and action.

Our success relies on our organizational strength, sustainability, and connections. We must be a workplace that the best people continue to be drawn to and that civic leaders, philanthropic funders, and agents of change see as an indispensable partner: well connected, solving problems.



I am so encouraged about our place in the community.

Expansive development plans have put a renewed lens on the river park, with a broad set of park users excited about our future and the opportunity to help shape the region. We are mindful of the need to make this asset inclusive and available to serve everyone in the community.

The Conservancy staff and board have gone through months of thoughtful planning to update this Strategic Plan. It includes our hopes, dreams, and big plans for the park and gardens. To expand our reach and grow our programs, we rely on the collaborative spirit of neighbors, partners, and civic allies now and into the future.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped us get to this point, and to all who will bring us where our community collectively needs to be.  
#lovethegrp

- Marguerite Lee, Board President

## Our Focus Areas for Our River Park



### GOVERNANCE & COLLABORATION

We utilize our governance and structure to engage the community, raise the park's visibility, support its management and maintenance, and promote it philanthropically.

- We are the indispensable park partner and civic connection point organization for the River Park
- We are trusted partners, collaborators, and advisors with the City of San Jose and other governmental agencies



### STEWARDSHIP & SAFETY

We engage the community through stewardship, programming, and philanthropy; and maintain a consistent presence to ensure a standard of excellence in park care.

- We strive to ensure an additional measure of excellence in park maintenance and management
- We work in partnership to build the conditions for a safe, secure park experience for all visitors
- We develop and rehabilitate public amenities and steward natural resources to maximize park use and leverage the urban nature experience



### PARK USE & COMMUNITY CONNECTION

We are creative and experimental in our approach and seek to maximize community connection and create welcoming spaces for all through education, art, diverse park spaces, and curated public experiences.

- We ensure nature-based learning opportunities are available to all park users, and connect people with nature and each other
- We foster community connection and inclusion to promote civic ownership of the River Park



### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & EXCELLENCE

We are creative and experimental in our approach and seek to maximize community connection and create welcoming spaces for all through education, art, diverse park spaces, and curated public experiences.

- We lead with diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice at the core of all we do
- Our growing operational capacity ensures our staff have the resources and tools to professionally execute our mission
- Our board has the strength and connectivity to leverage significant new opportunities
- Our increasing funding reach secures opportunities and sustains long term impact



# Shaping the Future of the Guadalupe Gardens

## “Prototype Park” Concept Design

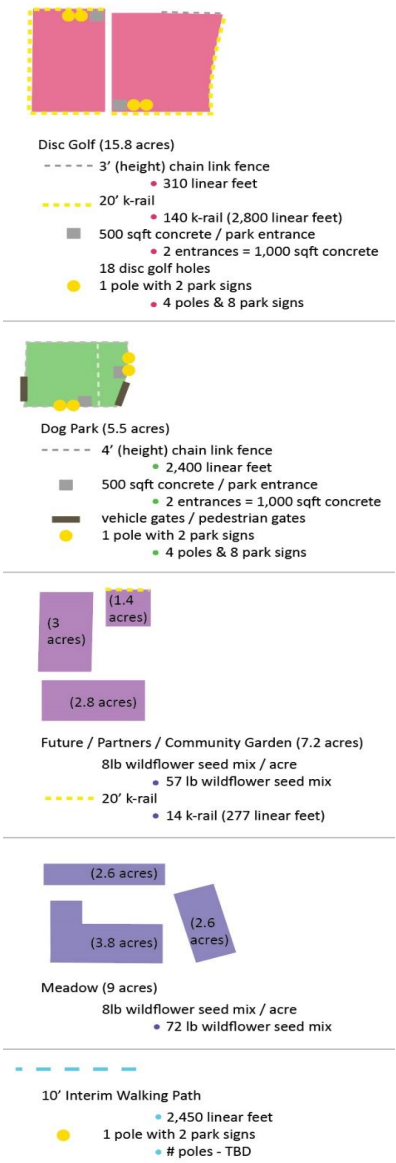


The rendering above also showcases the reconstruction of Columbus Park, which will include two soccer fields with two softball overlays, horseshoe courts, play areas, pickleball, restroom and other improvements. The City of San Jose will be hosting a community meeting on May 12, 2022, 6:00pm. Please visit [grpg.org](http://grpg.org) for additional information.

The Guadalupe Gardens rests between a moment of crisis and window of opportunity.

Last year, the City of San Jose received notice from the Federal Aviation Administration that the Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) is out of compliance to federal guidelines due to the growing number of unhoused residents currently occupying the undeveloped area of the Guadalupe Gardens. The area that makes up the Guadalupe Gardens from Coleman Ave. to SJC was formerly a residential neighborhood, purchased by the City through federal funding to ensure no residences lay within the airport runway approach. Incompliance with federal guidelines may jeopardize future federal funding to support airport operations and safety.

While the pandemic exacerbated the number of unhoused residents in the Guadalupe Gardens, homelessness is rooted in systemic underinvestment in housing and services. Encampments within the Guadalupe River Park face unhealthy or unsafe conditions: drought-induced fire risk, aviation noise, exposure to elements, and more. The lack of affordable housing and social services forces people seeking shelter to occupy places like the Guadalupe River Park, prompting cascading impacts on environmental health and park access.



The 2002 Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan acts as a roadmap for the future development of this area into a grand regional park with many botanical, educational, and community wellness opportunities. An opportunity now exists to make significant progress on a vision held 20 years ago – a “Prototype Park.”

The Prototype Park concept involves park uses and programs that are quick to build, inexpensive, and will have immediate impacts to attracting park visitors. It would also enable opportunities to collect data on the use of the park to help guide future developments and programs.

Our world in 2022 looks vastly different from 2002, and the future of the Guadalupe Gardens must be guided by wisdom gained through all the accomplishments and challenges we have experienced.

- **Parks and public spaces need to be managed and maintained.** The intimate proximity of an ecologically significant natural resource and a growing urban core necessitates commitment by public, private, and community partners as responsible good neighbors for the environment. The health and accessibility of our parks and open spaces have direct correlation to the overall wellbeing of our communities.
- **Addressing the impacts of encampments means to consider the whole system that perpetuates homelessness.** Our parks and public spaces show that that abatement without housing would only relocate the person, not solve the issue. We have witnessed within the Guadalupe River Park that solutions that do not include housing only shift homelessness around, driving unhoused residents closer to the river or to other parts of the park and neighborhood. Parks can play a role too, particularly through social cohesion and economic inclusion.
- **Neighborhood uplift can be part of the process of park development.** The many civic benefits of parks also come from the process of park development. Participating in public meetings, supporting park advocacy, volunteering, hosting park events, and inviting friends and family to visit yield benefits in themselves in promoting active, civically connected, and informed communities. We miss opportunities for collective achievement when the community is viewed as a consumer rather than a contributor.
- **Celebrate the uniqueness of San Jose, centering our natural resources, history, and community.** Our vision for the Guadalupe River Park as San Jose's front yard and the civic greenway that connects the best of us together rests on the ability of our communities to see themselves as part of the park. From the foothills and rivers that cradle our Valley, legacy and contributions of the Muwekma Ohlone, industry rooted in agriculture and manufacturing, gateway to the Dream for many immigrant communities, and technological leadership in Silicon Valley, we have much to draw inspiration from. Our identity as a City is based on the environment that nourishes us and the opportunity for civic achievement that we and many before us see.

The successful future of the Guadalupe Gardens will be determined by everyone's active and intentional participation. We ask that you, as supporters of our environment, open spaces, and community, to get involved in this generational opportunity to celebrate our place, culture, and spirit.

### Guadalupe River Park & Gardens

#### Phase I - Prototype Park COMMUNITY MEETING

Join us for a virtual community meeting to confirm the design approach for Phase I - Prototype Park improvements within the Guadalupe Gardens.

Monday, April 4, 2022 | 5:30-7:00pm  
<https://sanjoseca.zoom.us/j/94904663576>



Co-hosted by:

SAN JOSE  
PARKS, RECREATION &  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES





# Annual Impact Report



2021

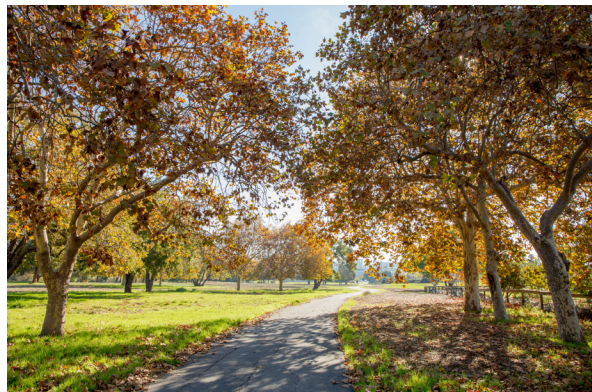
## Conservancy Overview

2021 brought with it a renewed sense of resilience following the traumatic events caused by the pandemic. We see the seeds of hope begin to sprout, with more opportunities to reopen and reconnect, and a reminder of the special place our parks and open spaces have in our hearts and neighborhoods.

Key components of community resilience are adaptation, hope, and joy, components the Guadalupe River Park nurtures. Whether it is shifting our education programs to online learning, uplifting our neighbors through skill-development and service, creating moments of joy through new artworks along the River Trail, the Guadalupe River Park is especially situated to propagate community healing, and the Conservancy sees this opportunity as an honored responsibility.

### 2021 Highlights

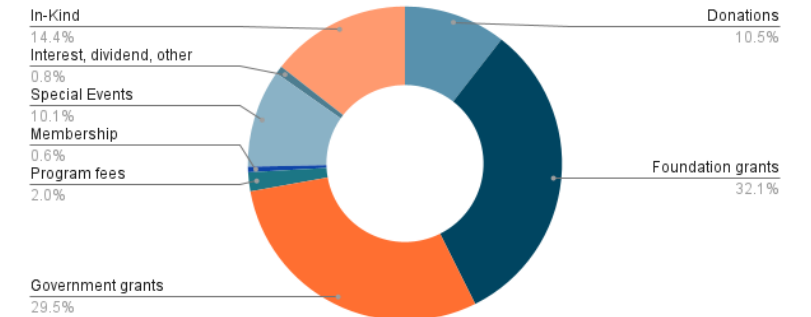
- Reopened the Rotary PlayGarden, welcoming over 1,200 in its first weekend.
- Started a workforce development program connecting unhoused residents to park maintenance.
- Hosted an in-person summer Camp Guadalupe and offered scholarships to youth in foster care.
- Created two new murals by local artists along the River Trail.
- Celebrated community joy and health through the return of our Pumpkins in the Park festival.



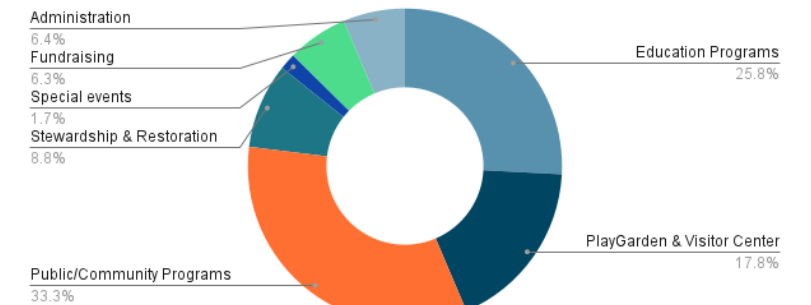
2021



## Financial Information



**Revenue: \$1,330,500\*** \*includes PPP loan forgiveness applied in 2020,



**Expenses: \$1,199,500**

## Education

Connecting our youth and community to our natural resource

- 1,325** Youth education participants
- 97** Scholarships provided
- 1,008** Students from Title 1 Schools reached

We offered our field trips as virtual packages in Spanish and English, designed to suit learning needs shared by our teachers and education partners.

## Advocacy

Providing community leadership for our River Park

- 79,045** Visitors to the Rotary PlayGarden
- 7,095** Attendees of our events
- 349** Conservancy supporters & members

We engaged over 600 residents and visitors through various events in 2021 to better learn their vision for the Guadalupe River Park.

## Stewardship

Nurturing cherishment of San Jose's civic greenway

- 137** Volunteer events hosted
- 2,012** Volunteers engaged
- 198,750** Pounds of debris removed

We hosted 6 Resilience Corps members, San Jose's young adult employment program, to support additional parks maintenance.



# Planting Roots, Establishing Community



The Historic Orchard replanting has been a long and exciting journey for the Conservancy, with the UC Master Gardeners there with us nearly every step of the way.

In January and February we were lucky enough to finally begin the tree planting process in our Historic Orchard. This revitalization project has been years in the making, and it was joyful and inspiring for us to see GRPC employees, volunteers, and UC Master Gardeners plant over 70 trees with species including apples, pears, figs, and pomegranates. We are anticipating planting over 150 trees by next year, so if you missed out this time it's not too late to join in for another Historic Orchard workday and make your mark on a piece of land commemorating the Valley of Heart's Delight!

In particular, we are extremely grateful for ongoing stewardship from the UC Master Gardeners, who have mindfully cared for the Historic Orchard for over 10 years. We interviewed UC Master Gardeners and dedicated volunteers Carolyn and Sharon about their history with gardening and why they are drawn to volunteer in the Historic Orchard.

## How long have you been volunteering in the Historic Orchard?

Carolyn: I started volunteering around 2012, about a year after the Master Gardeners took over this project.

Sharon: I started in 2019 when Carolyn was teaching a class on pruning and I got hooked!

## Where do Master Gardeners and their knowledge fit into the stewardship of the Historic Orchard?

S: The Master Gardeners and our volunteers have taken over about a third of the Historic Orchard since 2012, including planting, pruning, and teaching - we've done grafting classes, pruning classes. We're trying to show a variety of trees that people might grow at home or might want to try. Some of these trees we're keeping smaller, other trees we're letting grow to full size. We try to keep them low so they're easy to harvest.

C: When you first plant it, you cut it really low so then there's latent buds right below that cut. And then you pick 3 or 4 of those so that hopefully you have a good structure, a vase shape that'll come out. If you get a tree from somewhere and you leave it high like that, it's going to be really hard to manage. These newer trees we're planting, it'll be about 3



years until we get fruit from them.

S: And an orchard is so different from a vegetable garden. With a fruit tree you plant and you learn patience, so you get to know the different trees. Like one of the things that so impressed me about Carolyn when I first came was that she knew the names of all the trees and their history, whether or not they'd been pruned the year before. You build up that knowledge over time.

## What draws you to keep volunteering in the Historic Orchard?

S: My dad was one of those who would put the pot of water on the stove to boil before he'd go out and pick corn, so that you could have the corn fresh. I just kind of grew up with it. It's just one of those things where I can't imagine myself without having my hands in the dirt. And it's so good when I see the little kids on the tours the Conservancy brings out, they always go by the pomegranates since they're there most of the year, and the kids get to walk on dirt. And I just think that's important for kids to see the rest of the world besides cement.

C: I found that especially in difficult times, there's something about gardening and this hope that really gets your mind and attention off of other things, but also gives you something that you can look forward to, that you can rely on, and it really is about hope regardless of whatever else is going on. It's only recently we've been in a pandemic but people are always juggling a lot of things, and I just think all of this kind of stuff really helps. It's kind of nice to be reminded that there's some things, not that you don't influence, but some things that are really out of your hands and you get to coexist and work with.

**To have this kind of resource is so incredible...there's something about having these ties to the Valley of Heart's Delight.**

**In the Spring there's blossoms everywhere, in the Winter they're bare and the leaves have fallen...there's just things that you'd never know if you were just a block away. There's some kind of grounding here you just don't get otherwise.**

## RIVER PARK RESTORATION PROGRESS



Due to incredible efforts by our Heritage Rose Garden volunteers and Master Gardeners, we have replanted over 300 new roses. This adds to the existing showcase of 2,000+ species.



In partnership with Open Space Authority and the Rotary Club of San Jose, our team and volunteers have built new split rail fencing around the Guadalupe Gardens.



The Historic Orchard restoration is underway, with over 150 trees planned for replanting in 2022. Support comes from Farrington Historical Foundation, Arm, Pro-Sweep, and others.



**Community Project Funding**

We are deeply appreciative of Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren's community advocacy and her role in securing over \$7 million in funds to improve the lives of her constituents, including \$360,000 for the restoration and stewardship of the Guadalupe Gardens. This support will enable us to complete the Historic Orchard restoration, improve access to the Heritage Rose Garden, and engage unhoused residents and volunteers to help maintain the Guadalupe River Park.