

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Week of Nov 3, 2025

Graton Community Services District Completes Acquisition of Downtown Graton Town Square Property

\$750K Sonoma County Ag + Open Space Community Spaces Grant, Community Donations, and Local Support Secure Long-Sought Community Hub

Graton, CA — The Graton Community Services District (GCSD) is proud to announce the official **close of escrow on a Sonoma County Ag & Open Space Community Spaces grant to complete acquisition of the Graton Town Square property**, a 0.59-acre site in the heart of downtown Graton. This historic acquisition marks the culmination of a years-long, community-driven effort to transform the last undeveloped parcel in Graton into a permanent public gathering space.

“This is huge for Graton,” said Max Wilmarth, GCSD Director. “My family has been in Graton for five generations and we have never had something like this. The Graton Town Square will be the heart of the town for generations to come. It’s been a huge effort to get to this point and I want to thank my fellow Directors especially Jennifer Butler for bringing this idea to the Board, and huge kudos to General Manager Chad Davisson and coordinator Matt Jorgenson of ReVillage for shepherding us through the grant process. Thank you to Supervisor Lynda Hopkins, her staff, and the Ag + Open Space District for seeing our vision and supporting us every step of the way. Graton is forever grateful.”

Thanks to the \$750,000 grant from Ag + Open Space’s Community Spaces Program, GCSD was able to complete the acquisition alongside contributions from more than 150 individual donors, support from Sonoma Land Trust, Tourism Impact Fund, and a Community Infrastructure Grant from Supervisor Lynda Hopkins’ District 5 office.

“This unique project is taking land that’s seen many different uses over the years and transforming it into something truly useful and joyful for Graton residents and visitors alike,” said Misti Arias, General Manager of Ag + Open Space. “Our Community Spaces Program is meant to create and enhance vibrant open spaces in our cities and communities, and the Graton Town Square project is doing just that.”

The land, formerly home to Baker’s Lunch & Gas, has already begun its transformation. Over the last year, more than 150 volunteers and 50+ artists, musicians, and local performers have activated the space with 20+ public events, including the inaugural festivals like a Holiday Lights & Tractor Parade, Graton Day, Food & Wine Festival, as well as outdoor movies, summer concerts, and regular community workdays and potlucks.

GCSD extends its deep appreciation to our partners at Ag + Open Space, especially Misti Arias, Pamela Swan, and Olivia Fiori for their exceptional guidance and collaboration throughout the

grantmaking process. We are also deeply grateful for Supervisor Lynda Hopkins' unwavering support from the very inception of this project, and for her office's commitment to inclusive community outreach and infrastructure investment in West County.

Special thanks go to Jennifer Butler, Chad Davisson, and Max Wilmarth, who led this effort from within GCSD, and to Matt Jorgensen, Town Square Coordinator and co-lead of this project as a GCSD contractor and in collaboration with his local nonprofit ReVillage, which have been instrumental in bringing this shared vision to life.

"This is not just about land," said GCSD Board Member Jennifer Butler. "It's about reclaiming space for neighbors to meet, for kids to play, for artists to perform, and for all of us to be reminded of what it means to belong to a community."

Now under permanent protection via a Ag + Open Space conservation easement and recreation covenant, the Graton Town Square is set to become a long-term hub for public life, education, culture, and local economy. Construction of permanent amenities is expected to begin in mid-to-late 2026, when the fences will come down and the Square will fully open to the public.

In the meantime, the community is invited to join us for our next public event, the Graton Holiday Lights & Tractor Parade, happening Friday, December 6, 2025 at 4-7pm in downtown Graton. We'll be lighting up the night in celebration of our community and all the possibilities ahead.

For press inquiries or to get involved, please contact:

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