



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Fire
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: December 14, 2021
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief / Fire Warden, 805-681-5500
Director(s)
Contact Info: Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief, 805-681-5501
SUBJECT: **Approval and Execution of an Authorizing Resolution between Santa Barbara County and the State of California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), to receive \$280,000 under HCD's Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Resilient Planning and Public Services (CDBG MIT-PPS) program to be managed and implemented by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute an Authorizing Resolution (Attachment A) formalizing acceptance of state CDBG MIT-PPS funding for the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Santa Barbara South Coast foothill communities; and
- b) Determine this action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the action is a creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

In August of 2021, HCD announced that the County of Santa Barbara's application titled Community Wildfire Protection Plan in the amount of \$280,000.00 was eligible for the CDBG MIT-PPS program (Attachment B). The County must execute the Authorizing Resolution and Standard Agreement in order

to receive and draw down funds. As part of the process, HCD requires the execution of the Authorizing Resolution prior to drafting the Standard Agreement with grantees. Once the Standard Agreement has been drafted and delivered to the County of Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (County Fire) will bring it before the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to review and approve.

This grant funded project will develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Santa Barbara South Coast foothill communities. The CWPP project will also include a transportation study to assess access and egress in the CWPP development area. While the CWPP project will be managed and implemented by County Fire, the Santa Barbara County Community Services Department (CSD) will continue to serve in a facilitative role to coordinate with the State and County departments, as well as assisting with informational and administrative requests. The development of this CWPP will help make the Santa Barbara foothill communities more fire-safe by identifying and managing fire risk in the wildland-urban interface.

Background:

Santa Barbara County CSD approached County Fire regarding the availability of funds for planning projects from HCD's Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Resilient Planning and Public Services (CDBG MIT-PPS) program. As a result, County Fire submitted an application to HCD to fund a grant to develop a CWPP for the Santa Barbara South Coast foothill communities in the amount of \$280,000.00.

County Fire has extensive experience in the development of CWPPs within the county. County Fire has assisted in the development of the Mission Canyon and Eastern Goleta Valley-San Marcos Pass CWPPs. County Fire is currently assisting in the development of the Gaviota Coast CWPP and has provided various aid and support to a number of CWPPs within Santa Barbara County. The plan will become part of the County's network of community plans to address wildfires along the south coast of Santa Barbara County.

The project will identify and recommend measures to reduce wildfire ignitions, decrease structural ignitability, prioritize areas for hazardous fuel-reduction treatments, and improve transportation infrastructure to support evacuation plans. These recommendations can then be developed and implemented as projects with defined and verifiable impact.

Given the nature and extent of the scope of work in regard to the specialized area of focus, County Fire will be the principal over project implementation, progress and financial reporting. For its part, CSD will collaborate, confer and assist in those areas of CDBG MIT-PPS oversight particular to mutual roles and expertise in the area of CDBG MIT-PPS regulations and compliance. County Fire will interface with the eCivis Grants Portal as a mechanism for administration as well as jointly interface with HCD in regard to communications and requests for information.

Project Implementation Plan:

After the County Board of Supervisors (Board) approves and executes the Authorizing Resolution, the Authorizing Resolution will be forwarded to HCD. Upon receiving an approved Authorizing Resolution, HCD will process the formal Award Letter and Standard Agreement. Once these are signed and

executed by HCD and the County of Santa Barbara, the CWPP development process will begin a 36-month performance period.

The CWPP development process was adopted by the Board on August 2, 2011. The Board adopted a policy document titled, *Recommended Community Wildfire Protection Plan Development Process for Santa Barbara County*, which identifies eight steps and identifies specific localized stakeholders and considerations. These eight steps will be initiated after Board approval of the Authorizing Resolution and Standard Agreement:

- Convene the CWPP Development Team
- Development Team reaches out to Federal and State agencies
- Development Team engages interested parties
- Establish a base map and boundary area for the CWPP
- Develop a community risk assessment
- Recommend hazard reduction priorities and measures to reduce structure ignitability
- Develop draft plan
- Finalize and submit CWPP draft

The Board's policy identifies two groups of individuals to facilitate CWPPs. The CWPP Working Group made up of County staff from the CEO, Fire, Planning and Development and other interested departments. The second group, the Development Team, is charged with drafting the CWPP. The staff report for the 2011 Board policy states:

“The local community priorities are established through the process of developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. CWPPs are developed as through a collaborative process that identifies and assesses fire risks and identifies and recommends best practices for eliminating or mitigating fire risks and structural ignitability. . . CWPPs may help to increase awareness of the possible ecological consequences of wildland fuel management practices, so that individual fuel reduction projects avoid or minimize harm to the environment where feasible.

Implementation of any recommended “best practice” or recommended hazardous fuel reduction within a particular CWPP might be modified, or not implemented at all, depending on a number of factors, including: environmental review; permit actions; and the availability of funding. Within any particular CWPP, County could make clear that any necessary environmental review required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and/or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) shall be completed prior to commencement of any recommended hazardous fuel reduction.”

An important element in the development of a CWPP is the consultant selection process. In the spring of 2022, the Development Team will initiate a competitive RFP process to select a consultant to produce the CWPP. After the Development Team chooses a consultant, regular Development Team meetings are scheduled to develop the elements of the CWPP. Early CWPP elements include developing and collecting community data and quantitative data through fire behavior modeling, risk modeling, and hazard assessment. The Development Team will also meet with both governmental agency and non-governmental organization stakeholders for both feedback and to ensure a balanced approach to the plan strategies during the development of the CWPP.

The latter elements of CWPP development include plan preparation, review, and approval. These elements are a six to eight-month process. At least three public workshops will be conducted plus numerous stakeholder meetings. After the Development Team has completed draft edits, public workshops and stakeholder meetings, the CWPP will be presented to the Board for approval.

The performance period for this CDBG MIT-PPS grant is 36 months after the signing of the Standard Agreement. The projected timeframe for the completion of this CWPP is 12 to 18 months which is well within the 36-month performance period.

CEQA Compliance:

The development of this CWPP is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(4). The CWPP is a planning document with no ground disturbing activities or impacts on the environment. Approval of this action is a creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Impacts to fiscal and facilities are minimal; if any, for the life of the grant. The HCD’s Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Resilient Planning and Public Services program will fund 100% of grant eligible costs.

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State	\$ -		
Federal			\$ 280,000.00
Fees			
Other: Fire District			
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 280,000.00

Narrative:

Total state funding for this grant is a pass-through from the federal government at \$280,000 with total estimated CSD and County Fire project funding at \$0.00.

Staffing Impacts:

There are minimal staffing impacts for the implementation and management of the CWPP for the Santa Barbara foothill communities. No additional County, CSD or County Fire staff will be required to implement and manage the development of the CWPP.

Special Instructions:

Upon Board approval and execution, the Clerk is asked to please return a copy of the minute order and duplicate original Grant Resolution to the Fire Department, attention: Frederick Tan.

Attachments:

- A. Grant Resolution
- B. HCD Eligibility Notice

Authored by:

Rob Hazard, Fire Marshal

CC:

Shawna Jorgensen, Chief Financial Officer
Frederick Tan, Battalion Chief