



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: Community Services
Department No.: 057
For Agenda Of: October 5, 2021
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department George Chapjian, Community Services Director
Director(s) (805) 568-2467

Contact Info: Ashley Watkins, Division Chief
(805) 568-3514

SUBJECT: Board approval for Grant Applications for PG&E Resilience Hubs and California Resilience Challenge Grant Programs

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions: That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve, authorize, and ratify the Community Services Department's submittal of applications for grant funding to the PG&E Resilience Hubs and California Resilience Challenge Grant Programs by submitting grant applications, including all required attachments and supporting documentation; and
- b) Determine that the above-recommend actions are not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 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:

This item is on the agenda to obtain approval from the Board of Supervisors for the Sustainability Division to seek funding from the PG&E Resilience Hubs¹ (\$50,000) and California Resilience Challenge Grant² (\$200,000) programs. The goal for this funding is the design of a network of resilience hubs, starting with two pilot hubs (one in North County and one in South County), that would provide safe refuge and critical services during climate-driven emergencies, including wildfires, extreme heat events, and coastal and inland flooding, as well as community gathering space year-round.

Funds are being pursued as one of many greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience strategies that support local climate action and adaptation plans. The funds would be used for planning purposes, and additional funds would need to be secured to provide infrastructure improvements (e.g., solar + storage) for the sites identified.

Background:

The County is working to meet the challenges of climate change head-on with the One Climate Initiative. Current activities of the One Climate Initiative include updating the County's 2030 Climate Action Plan, Safety and Environmental Justice Elements of the General Plan, Active Transportation Plan, and Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The County is also a Steering Committee member of the Santa Barbara County Regional Climate Collaborative, which includes cities, regional agencies, and community organizations working towards shared climate outcomes. Addressing climate adaptation and resiliency strategies is a primary concern for all of these activities.

A resilience hub provides a physical space or set of resources that supports community resilience—such as access to power, shelter, and information—during climate-driven emergencies, including wildfires, extreme heat events, and coastal and inland flooding, as well as future Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events. They can also be used as a community gathering space year-round. Development of resilience hubs has been identified as a key community priority coming out of a series of Resilience Roundtables convened by the local environmental nonprofit Community Environmental Council. Additionally, the Sustainability Division will soon launch the Energy Assurance Assessment Service (EAAS) program to provide technical assistance to building owners to support energy efficiency and resilience projects. Sustainability held a Critical Framing Workshop earlier this year with key stakeholders to identify selection criteria and functions of facilities that could benefit from more resilient energy systems, such as battery storage and microgrids. Participants strongly supported focusing EAAS outreach to sites such as schools, libraries, or community centers that could serve as resilience hubs.

Staff has identified funding from the PG&E Resilience Hubs and California Resilience Challenge Grant programs for conceptual design of a network of resilience hubs. The ultimate goal for this funding is the selection of two resiliency hub sites that could provide safe refuge and critical services during climate-driven emergencies and PSPS events. The Sustainability Division will coordinate with the Santa Barbara County Regional Climate Collaborative and community organizations including the Community

¹ [PG&E Resilience Hubs Grant Application 2021 \(pge.com\)](https://www.pge.com)

² [FINAL_CRC2021_RFP \(resilientcal.org\)](https://www.resilientcal.org)

Environmental Council and members of the Central Coast Climate Justice Network to submit the grant proposals.

Project activities would include:

- Conducting community engagement in climate-vulnerable areas of the county to better understand the community's challenges and desired outcomes related to resilience hubs.
- Identification of a short list of potential resilience hub locations that will then be evaluated against community needs, desired features, related community resilience strategies, and site conditions to select two pilot hub locations.
- Development of a conceptual design for the two pilot resilience hub locations based on more detailed site assessments and community feedback.
- Creation of a resilience hub design toolkit to help identify and design future resilience hub sites throughout Santa Barbara County.

The pilot hubs would be located in geographically and culturally diverse parts of the county, one in the more agricultural North County and another in the more urban South Coast, to gain experience and document best practices for hub design and operations that best meet community needs and climate risks across Santa Barbara County.

Funds are being pursued as one of many greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience strategies that support local climate action and adaptation plans. The funds will be used for planning purposes, and additional funds would need to be secured to provide infrastructure improvements (e.g., solar + storage) for the sites identified.

Performance Measure: Outcomes of the grant will be the development of pilot resiliency hub conceptual designs, a funding plan, a resilience hub design toolkit, and selection of two pilot hub sites.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes.

Staffing Impacts: Existing staff would be used to implement the grants.

Special Instructions:

Please send one copy of the signed the minute order to Ashley Watkins, awatkins@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

Attachments:

Attachment A: PG&E Resilience Hubs RFP

Attachment B: California Resilience Challenge Grant RFP

Authored by:

Ashley Watkins, Sustainability Division Chief