



DATE: June 18, 2024

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Interim Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Accept and Appropriate \$61,000 in Grant Funding from Pacific Gas and Electric for the No-Cost Residential Chipping and Defensible Space Resident Assistance Programs

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the attached resolution authorizing the City Manager to accept and appropriate \$61,000 for No-Cost Chipping Program and Resident Assistance Program

SUMMARY

The Fire Department was awarded \$61,000 from Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) to help fund the No-Cost Residential Chipping Program and Defensible Space Resident Assistance Program (RAP) to assist residents who are unable to cut and stack tree limbs due to limited physical abilities and/or economic barriers.

Staff is requesting that Council approve the attached resolution to accept and appropriate \$61,000 grant funds from PG&E for the Fire Department's 2024 Vegetation Management Program.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Hayward Fire Department (HFD) has developed a Vegetation Management Program (VPM) which has been utilized by the residents of Hayward and Fairview Fire Protection District (FFPD) high fire hazard areas to create defensible space since 2012. The VPM consists of, but is not limited to, a No-Cost Residential Chipping Service, and a Residential Assistance program (RAP) aimed at assisting all residents and especially disabled and low-income residents, with tree trimming and clearing assistance. The VPM relies heavily on grant funding to function.

The No-Cost Residential Chipping service is an incentivized program for all residents in Hayward's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area (East of Mission Blvd. South of D St. all the way to Union City, and all of Fairview Fire Protection District) to continue the maintenance of pruning the lower limbs of trees, removing dead materials, and aged shrubs. All applicants of

the Chipping Program must reside in Hayward's WUI. Some areas of Hayward's WUI lie within Tiers 1, 2, and 3 of CPUC High Fire Threat District (HFTD). Homeowners can express interest by using an online application form. Assistance will be provided on a first come first serve basis depending on the posted chipping schedule. Residents are expected to cut and stack the materials along their driveways or at the curb for contractor(s) to collect on a weekly basis. Chips can be left for ground cover or hauled and disposed offsite as green waste. Contractors will receive a list of properties that "applied" for the Chipping Program and that service will run for six to eight weeks based on the number of interested homeowners.

The Residential Assistance Program (RAP) was developed to help those residents who are unable cut and stack limbs on their own for the no cost chipping program because of limited physical abilities and/or economic barriers to participate. All applicants for the RAP are required to meet a criterion of low-income, age, and ability to perform the work. We ask applicants to provide proof of disability (SDI statement) or economic hardship to participate. HFD staff and the contractor will meet with the homeowner to prioritize fuel reduction needed for defensible space. The selected contractor will assist approved residents by cutting vegetation and subsequently chipping and leaving the chips for ground cover or removing them from the site. When RAP assessments are done many factors are considered, such as their personal criteria, location of home to major escape routes, PG&E transmission lines, and all nearby structures or assets.

The program area covers steep terrain (60 to 80% slopes) and lateral "chimneys". The roads and most dwellings are located on the ridges; however, many of the properties extend into the drainages. Pacific Gas and Electric transmission lines cross through the WUI area, from Palomares Rd., through Five Canyons Pkwy, Fairview Ave., East Ave., and Mission Blvd. The fuel complex is a mix of grassland on the top of south/ southwest facing slopes, with heavy brush on the slopes. The riparian zone and north facing slopes are oak woodland with some scattered stands of eucalyptus. Weather conditions in the WUI vary but the seasonal Diablo winds can result in large, rapidly spreading fires that cause widespread damage to hillside properties.

Both services bring important value to the entire community as they reduce fuel load throughout the area and works to stop fire spreading from property to property. Many of the properties participating in the chipping program are along access routes and the work property owners do helps to mitigate fuel load along these routes.

In 2023 we serviced 131 chipping participants, 29 homes opted to keep the chips to assist with erosion control, 762.5 cubic yards of chips were hauled away as green waste. Homeowners worked on approximately 57.43 acres of land with an estimated 1007.5 homeowner hours to prepare for the chipping crews. Out of the 11 RAP homes serviced in 2023, 10 qualified as low income, 4 were on state disability and all are part of our vulnerable population.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The improved quality of maintenance on these properties will have a positive impact on local residential areas by increasing property value by maintaining curb appeal and neighborhood beautification standards.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This agenda item is a routine operational item and does not directly relate to any of the six priorities outlined in the Council's Strategic Roadmap.

FISCAL IMPACT

This funding source does not require a match and will have no negative impact on the City's General Fund. All grant funds received will help offset expenses in the Fire Department budget for the procurement of supplies and services used to fund No-Cost Residential Chipping Program and Defensible Space Resident Assistance Program.

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

This grant project helps to sustain the community by reducing human ignitions and the frequency of large fires. It also manages the wildland urban interface to maintain or re-establish native vegetation. All of which can make a Bay-friendly environment.

PUBLIC CONTACT

No public contact was needed to accept the grant.

NEXT STEPS

If the Council authorizes this action, staff will appropriate the grant funding into the Fire Department's Local Grant Fund (Fund 220) budget, and will continue offering chipping services and defensible space resident assistance program to the community.

Prepared by: Norma Marples, Sr. Secretary

Recommended by: Eric Vollmer, Interim Fire Chief

Approved by:



Dustin Claussen, Interim City Manager