



**DATE:**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Fire Chief

**SUBJECT:** Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Accept and Appropriate \$242,865 in Grant Funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's the Creation of Defensible Space in the Hayward Hills Project

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopts a resolution (Attachment II) authorizing the City Manager to accept and appropriate \$242,865 in grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the creation of defensible space in the Hayward Hills Project (Defensible Space Project).

**SUMMARY**

In October 2020, the Hayward Fire Department was awarded a pre-planning grant of \$21,132 to conduct a defensible space campaign, strengthen partnerships, and plan out the demonstration process. After careful planning across three departments, the City successfully completed phase I of the three-year project and was awarded an additional \$242,865 by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to prepare for and implement a large-scale project, *Creation of Defensible Space in the Hayward Hills and Five Canyons*. The scope of work for the project consists of creating a full-scale outreach campaign to educate the Hayward and Fairview communities on wildfire behavior, the importance of defensible space for wildfire mitigation, and to demonstrate how to create defensible space. The project is focused on the Ward Creek Drainage area and demonstrations will be visible in a high-trafficked area.

**BACKGROUND**

HMGP funds are awarded to local agencies that have identified plans and projects that reduce the effects of future natural disasters. Program goals include improving the resiliency of communities and implementing effective mitigation strategies in high-risk areas. In October 2020, HFD was awarded a pre-planning grant of \$21,132 to conduct a defensible space campaign, strengthen partnerships, and plan out the demonstration process.

As part of the Phase 1 work, HFD worked with the City's Public Information Officer and staff to inform Hayward Hills and Fairview residents of the City's efforts. Staff conducted a full-scale

outreach and education plan to increase knowledge about wildfires, reiterate the importance of mitigation strategies for property owners, and address general safety concerns. The defensible space project is based on a previously delivered and successful educational campaign on defensible space creation. HFD designed this project's campaign by evaluating past program designs and making strategy adjustments to promote even more resident buy-in and maintenance. In addition, staff also conducted stakeholder outreach and presented to the City's community partners, including the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), Hayward Area Recreation District (HARD), and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), and asked for their participation to deliver messages to the community on the campaign. HFD also conducted educational workshops and produced educational materials and a video for reference (Attachment III). Upon completing Phase I planning and campaigning activities, FEMA approved \$242,865 of grant funding to complete Phase II activities.

## **DISCUSSION**

The *Creation of Defensible Space in the Hayward Hills and Five Canyons* project consists of an education campaign and demonstration that aims to provide defensible space education and promote participation by communities within a two-mile radius of the Ward Creek Drainage area. The purpose of this project is to inform residents on what defensible space is and demonstrate how to create defensible space on their property.

The City of Hayward's Fire, Utilities, and Maintenance Department staff will partner with HARD and PG&E to conduct a large-scale demonstration project visible in a high-trafficked area around the Ward Creek Drainage area. The Ward Creek Drainage area is a large canyon at Walpert Ridge (elevation 1,300 feet) and terminates at Mission Boulevard (elevation 300 feet). It is approximately 1,200 acres. The site includes a mix of grassland and heavy brush and sits on the top of south/southwest-facing slopes. The riparian zone and north-facing slopes are oak woodland with some scattered stands of eucalyptus. Heavy ladder fuels with brush, down-dead wood, litter, and duff are found throughout the hills, where 1,184 residential properties are situated. The Ward Creek Canyon extends along the City of Hayward, unincorporated Fairview, and private properties.

This project also includes the HFD Chipping Program, which incentivizes residents to maintain the pruning of lower limbs on trees and removal of dead materials and aged shrubs. Residents may "apply" and select a week for chipping between the beginning of fire season (spring) and in the late summer-fall, when wildfire awareness is heightened. Residents are expected to cut and stack the materials along their driveways or curbs for the contractor(s) to collect weekly. Chips will be hauled and disposed of offsite as green waste. If a resident cannot perform their maintenance, they can apply to HFD's Resident Assistance Program. This program is grant-funded and assists residents with limited physical abilities or who need economic assistance to participate in the Chipping Program.

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

This project has no direct economic impact.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

By accepting this grant, the City will receive \$242,865 in reimbursement for the activities completed to continue the education campaign and conduct large-scale demonstrations for Hayward residents. The match requirement of 25% (\$80,955) for the City will be met through existing staff salaries paid through General Fund monies. No additional staff will be required to complete the work for this project. HFD would not be able to conduct a project of this scale without the grant and opportunity for staff hours used for cost-share.

## **STRATEGIC ROADMAP**

This item is not directly tied to a project identified in the Strategic Roadmap; however, creating defensible space to mitigate wildfire risk and property loss will benefit all members of the Hayward community.

## **SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES**

This project is an educational campaign and does not go above and beyond minimum code requirements, as identified by the Fire Chief, to maintain and protect the wildland-urban interface.

## **NEXT STEPS**

With Council approval, staff will accept the grant funds and start planning the Phase II activities.

*Prepared by:* Shanalee Gallagher, Management Analyst

*Recommended by:* Garrett Contreras, Fire Chief

*Approved by:*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kelly McAdoo', is written over a horizontal line.

Kelly McAdoo, City Manager