

CITY OF OAKLAND

Agenda Report

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TO: Office of the City Administrator
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly
FROM: Fire Department
DATE: February 14, 2006

SUBJECT: Resolution Authorizing the City Administrator to Apply for, Accept and Appropriate Up To Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000.00) Of 2006 Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Funds for the Oakland Regional Fuel Management Project

SUMMARY

A resolution has been prepared requesting that the City Council authorize the City Administrator to apply for, accept and appropriate up to three million dollars (\$3,000,000.00) of 2006 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) pre-disaster mitigation grant funds, if awarded, for the Oakland Regional Fuel Management Project.

The proposed project is a collaboration between the City of Oakland, UC Berkeley, and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to reduce heavy fuel loads, restore native forests, enhance strategic fuel break system and defensible spaces in order to help create a fire-resistant community.

FISCAL IMPACT

The project will be funded by federal grant funds and local match contributions. The City of Oakland, as the lead agency, will receive the funds and manage the grant. The funds would be allocated and the 25% matching contribution shared based on the size and scope of work for the individual projects.

Agency	Grant Amount	Required Match
City of Oakland	\$1,986,871	\$412,280
UC Berkeley	\$661,619	\$220,550
East Bay Regional Parks	\$351,510	\$117,170
Total	\$3,000,000	\$750,000

On January 26, 2006, the Wildfire Assessment District Board voted to contribute \$350,000 towards the City of Oakland's share of the matching requirement from the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Fund 2321. The remaining \$62,280 will be funded from the Fire Suppression Assessment Fund 2320.

The project duration is not to exceed 36 months.

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By partnering with local agencies, the City of Oakland will benefit from \$3,750,000 worth of vegetation fuel management work over a three year period, for an expenditure of \$412,280, a ratio of 9 to 1 return on investment.

BACKGROUND

OFD staff was notified about the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program in September 2005. OFD staff determined that an Oakland Vegetation Management proposal to enhance the high fire hazard area in concert with current Wildfire Prevention Assessment District efforts would provide significant progress toward the City's fire mitigation efforts. OFD staff conducted research to determine viable projects that would support Oakland's fire mitigation goals.

In late December 2005 the Fire Department was approached by UC Berkeley and East Bay Regional Park District to pursue a grant opportunity to fund fuel management activities in the Oakland Hills. It is advantageous for the City of Oakland to form the partnership because of the competitive nature of the grant, short grant filing deadline, and the need for detailed and extensive supporting documents such as Environmental Impact Reports and other assessments which UC Berkeley and East Bay Regional Park District have already conducted, and are utilized to substantiate the validity of the grant proposal. Staff from all three agencies believe that because the application process is highly competitive, with only five from an anticipated three hundred applications advancing, none of the agencies would be successful if individual applications were submitted.

The project area consists of adjacent pieces of land owned by the City of Oakland, UC Berkeley, and East Bay Regional Park District in the high fire risk Oakland Hills. Because all of the proposed work is in the City of Oakland, and the Oakland Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau has the expertise necessary to manage the project, it was decided that the City of Oakland would be the lead agency. All of the proposed work is in alignment with the City of Oakland's General Plan, Safety Element, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the goals of the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District. The application was forwarded to the State of California's Office of Emergency Services for review on February 3, 2006; subject to Council approval and State recommendation, the grant application will be advanced to FEMA for consideration in March 2006.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACT

There have been a recorded 16 major fires in the Oakland/Berkeley area since 1923. Each fire occurred in the same general areas under similar environmental conditions. The 1991 Oakland Hills fire burned over 1,600 acres, taking 25 lives, and destroying an estimated 3,354 structures, with an estimated value of \$1.5 billion.

Following the tragic 1991 Firestorm, the Mayor, City Council, and the Fire Department committed to aggressively pursue programs and projects that would effectively mitigate the risk of wildland fires and reduce the loss of lives and property following wildland fires. Further, in alignment with the Hills Emergency Forum (HEF) goals and recommendations, OFD coordinates its efforts with those of other local jurisdictions to maximize resources and reach mutual goals.

In January 2004, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) published a report that recommended three landscape scale actions to diminish wildfire hazards by reducing community vulnerability and fuel buildup. Specifically, these hazard reducing actions have been identified: 1) Create fire-resistant communities and defensible spaces; 2) Create strategic fuel break systems; and 3) Reduce heavy fuel loads and restore forests. To that end the scope of work for this proposed project encompasses these recommendations and calls for: 1) the elimination of exotic vegetation in the Oakland Hills to create fuel breaks, 2) promote the growth of native species, 3) provides defensible space, and 4) enhance ingress and egress routes and provide space for staging areas within the approximate 350 acre project area.

This project is compatible with current Oakland Wildfire Prevention Assessment District vegetation management goals, and includes contiguous and adjacent UC Berkeley and EBRPD properties.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Oakland Regional Fuel Management Project implements the planning efforts of the regional Hills Emergency Forum (HEF), the City of Oakland, Fire Department/Vegetation Management Program, UC Berkeley Fire Mitigation Committee and the East Bay Regional Park District Fire Department. The City of Oakland, UC Berkeley and East Bay Regional Park District recognize the benefits of collaboration and have proposed a partnership to maximize resources and reach mutual fuel reduction goals.

The proposed scope of work includes the removal of heavy fuel loads, specifically exotic plants on approximately 350 acres of land in the City of Oakland and in contiguous and adjacent properties belonging to UC Berkeley and EBRPD (See attached map). The management strategy proposed by this project promotes a forest conversion, that is, the emerging native forest of California Bay, Oak, Maple, Buckeye, Redwood and Hazelnut will be retained and the existing Eucalyptus-dominated exotic canopy forest will be eradicated. The native species produce either considerably lesser fuel loads or are most fuel-productive well before the peak of the regional fire season. Felled Eucalyptus and Acacia will be either removed -- most will be chipped -- or lopped and scattered or chipped and scattered on the project site.

Logs will be placed and retained as a component of the sediment/erosion control measures that are to be deployed and will serve as habitat supporting a variety of wildlife.

The scope of work also includes enhancement of the existing 1991 fuel break/fire break, with additional staging areas. The project will also improve defensible space and accessibility of egress and ingress routes.

Protection of the native species, and ongoing management after project completion, will ensure a successful conversion protective of natural and recreational resource values, including but not limited to habitat, hydrology, soils and geology, and air quality. Additionally, Eucalyptus seedlings emerging from the latent seed stock present in the project area will be managed over time to prevent re-colonization of this invasive species.

Follow-up treatment on City owned property will be performed within the OFD's Vegetation Management Unit and conducted as an ongoing maintenance operation, beyond the scope of the proposed grant but within the current funding, for the Oakland Fire Department's Vegetation Management Unit and Wildfire Prevention Assessment District. Additionally, UC Berkeley and East Bay Regional Park District are committed to conducting the necessary long-term maintenance on their properties.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic- If awarded federal grant funds, the City of Oakland will complete \$3,750,000 worth of work for an expenditure of \$412,280, a ratio of 9 to 1 return on investment. Additionally, the proposed grant project will create the opportunity for qualified local contractors to compete for contracts to perform the services necessary to complete the project.

Environmental- All work to be performed within the scope of the project will comply with local, state and federal environmental requirements. Environmental Impact Reports will be prepared as required. The proposed grant project will support local environmental sustainability best practices.

Social Equity- While the project area is located in the high fire risk Oakland Hills, the scope of work for the proposed grant project creates fuel/fire breaks that would slow the spread of fire and therefore decrease the risk of lost life and property throughout the City of Oakland in the event of a wildland fire.

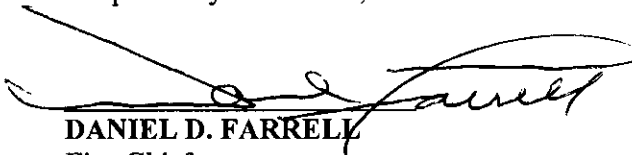
Recommendation(s) and Rationale

Staff recommends approval of the proposed grant project and a resolution authorizing the City Administrator to apply for, accept and appropriate up to \$3,000,000 of Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant funds.

Action Requested of the City Council

Staff requests the City Council to approve this report and a resolution authorizing the City Administrator to apply for, accept and appropriate up to three million dollars (\$3,000,000.00) of Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds for the Oakland-Regional Fuel Management Project.

Respectfully submitted,

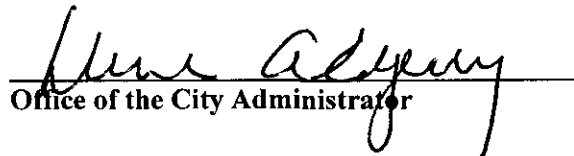


DANIEL D. FARRELL
Fire Chief

Reviewed by: Renee' A. Domingo
Division Manager

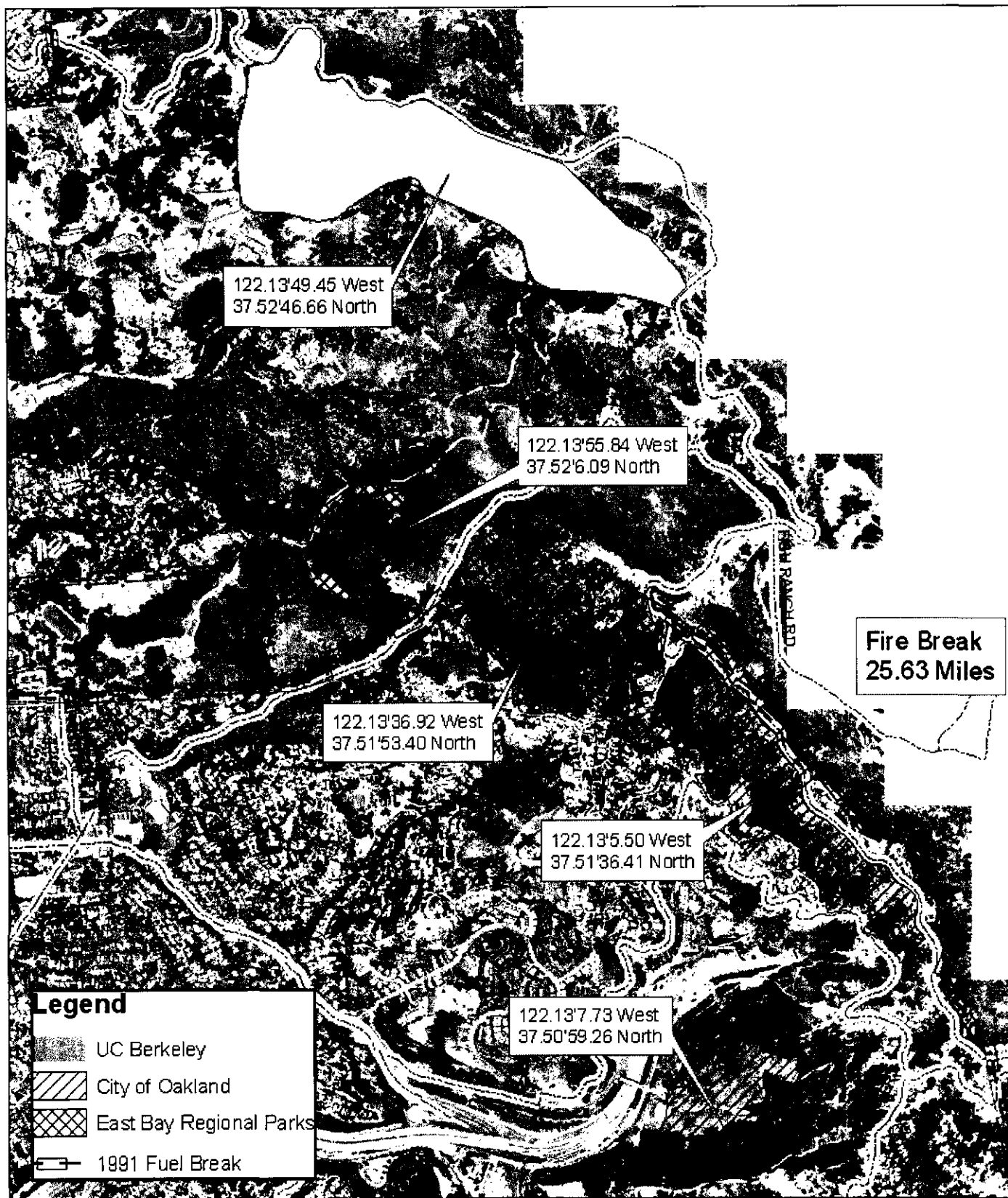
Prepared by: Nina Morris
Personnel, Safety &
Liability Division

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:**



Office of the City Administrator

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Wildfire Assessment District

Oakland Regional Fuel Management Project



Approved for Form and Legality:

W. Eugene M. Moore
Office of the City Attorney

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CITY OF OAKLAND

Oakland City Council

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Resolution No. _____ C.M.S.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT AND APPROPRIATE UP TO THREE MILLION DOLLARS (\$3,000,000.00) OF 2006 FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION GRANT FUNDS FOR THE OAKLAND REGIONAL FUEL MANAGEMENT PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Oakland-Regional Fuel Management project is in alignment and meets the goals in the City of Oakland's General Plan-Safety Element and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; and

WHEREAS, there is a documented history of extreme fire danger in the Oakland Hills and that fuel management projects reduce the risks that have previously resulted in the loss lives and property as a result of wild land fires; and

WHEREAS, it is in the City's best interests to partner with local agencies to maximize resources and attain mutual goals, and the City of Oakland Regional Fuel Management Project is a collaboration with the City of Oakland, UC Berkeley, and East Bay Regional Park District to enhance defensible spaces, create strategic fuel break systems, reduce heavy fuel loads and restore forests to help create a fire-resistant community; and

WHEREAS, the FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation program provides grant funds for the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event to reduce overall risks to the population and structures, while also reducing reliance on funding from an actual disaster declaration; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland is the lead agency and there is a local match requirement in the amount of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000.00), and the partners have agreed that based on the size and scope of their individual projects, the City of Oakland will contribute four hundred twelve thousand two hundred eighty dollars (\$412,280.00), the University of California, Berkeley will contribute two hundred twenty thousand five hundred and fifty dollars (\$220,550.00), and the East Bay Regional Park District will contribute one hundred seventeen thousand one hundred seventy dollars (\$117,170.00) towards the local match requirement; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland will prepare a letter of commitment to make the FEMA match required in the amount of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000.00) and will execute agreements with UC Berkeley and the East Bay Regional Park District to secure the matching grant contributions promised by those agencies; and

WHEREAS, the City is required to comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and shall comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and guidelines as prescribed by the Secretary for Resources and by the City of Oakland's Environmental Review Regulations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Oakland approves the filing of an application, acceptance and appropriation of up to three million dollars (\$3,000,000.00) in 2006 Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Funds, for the Oakland-Regional Fuel Management Project; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Administrator is authorized to enter into agreements with the University of California, Berkeley and the East Bay Regional Park District to secure their matching-grant contributions in the amounts of two hundred twenty thousand five hundred and fifty dollars (\$220,550.00) and one hundred seventeen thousand one hundred seventy (\$117,170.00), respectively; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Administrator is authorized to appropriate all matching-grant contributions by University of California, Berkeley and the East Bay Regional Park District to the Oakland Regional Fuel Management Project without further action by the City Council; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Oakland has or will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the project and funds are available under the jurisdiction of the Oakland Fire Department to begin the project; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Administrator or her designee is authorized to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to applications, letters of commitment, agreements, amendments, payment requests which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all contracts used for the aforementioned contract shall be approved for form and legality by the Office of the City Attorney prior to execution and a copy be placed on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, _____, _____

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES- BROOKS, BRUNNER, CHANG, KERNIGHAN, NADEL, QUAN, REID AND
PRESIDENT DE LA FUENTE

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST: _____
LATONDA SIMMONS
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California