



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Joe DeVries
Deputy City Administrator

SUBJECT: Amendment to The Oakland Firesafe
Council Agreement

DATE: June 26, 2023

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Jun 30, 2023 10:24 PDT)

Date: Jun 30, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt Resolution Amending Resolution No. 89376 CMS, Which Awarded A Grant To The Oakland Firesafe Council To Fund Coordination On Emergency Preparedness And Response, By: (1) Increasing The Total Grant Amount By Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000) From One Hundred And Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000) To One Hundred And Thirty-One Thousand Dollars (\$131,000) To Support Regional Intergovernmental Wildfire Prevention Efforts; And (2) Correct The Name Of The Grant Recipient From “Firesafe Council” to “The Oakland Firesafe Council”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Oakland is considering participating in a regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for vegetation management to better coordinate wildfire prevention efforts across the East Bay. This work originally contemplated formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) but the member agencies agreed to a less restrictive approach of creating an MOU. This resolution recommends adding six thousand dollars (\$6,000) to the existing grant agreement with The Oakland Firesafe Council and extending the grant agreement six (6) months to pay for coordinating work to draft the MOU.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The series of historic wildfires throughout California and the Western United States in recent years demonstrates that the impacts of global climate change will continue to have potentially devastating local effects throughout the region; including habitat destruction, loss of life, economic impacts, infrastructural damage, and public health hazards associated with air quality. Reactive approaches to fire management and containment are deployed during times of crisis and overextend local and state resources.

The spread of wildfire does not respect political or jurisdictional boundaries; burn areas and air quality impacts from smoke extend throughout the region. A large portion of the East Bay region, including the East Bay Hills from Hercules to Fremont are a CalFire designated high-risk danger zone. A more coordinated approach and investment in wildfire prevention and

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vegetation management will help to mitigate the number and severity of wildfire events. Regional coordination may prove both more effective and more efficient in developing and implementing best practices, as well as sharing expertise and other resources. The East Bay Region contains more than twenty (20) municipalities, counties, and fire districts, including the City of Oakland, that may all benefit from a coordinated fire management approach. Several local jurisdictions, including the City of Oakland, University of California at Berkeley, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the City of Berkeley, Contra Costa County, East Bay Municipal Utilities District, and the City of Orinda, have been involved in the interagency fire prevention work for over three years coordinated by the Oakland City Administration, in particular around Grizzly Peak which winds through these jurisdictions. The cities of Berkeley, El Cerrito, Pinole, Kensington and Richmond, as well as Alameda County have passed similar resolutions in support of an MOU.

In 2019 Oakland City Council adopted Resolution #87940 which prioritized wildfire prevention in Oakland. Similarly, City Council created the Wildfire Prevention Working Group (WPWG) in 2020 in response with the same goal in mind. The WPWG coordinates city departments and connects with neighboring jurisdictions on prevention efforts.

In 2021 City Council adopted Resolution #88838 encouraging the city to participate in discussions to create a regional Joint Powers Authority (JPA) regarding vegetation management.

The budget amendment adopted by the City Council in June 2022, included funding to be used to issue grants and contracts to community-based organizations to provide urgently needed activities to help protect community health and safety, and increase equity, reduce vulnerabilities and negative impacts on our community, among other goals. It was this legislation during the midcycle budget which allowed for the \$125,000 investment in The Oakland Firesafe Council.

Oakland has been participating in the conversation and the regional body decided not to pursue a JPA yet as some partners were not interested and many also felt that it would be too cumbersome at this time. Instead, the regional entities decided to consider a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The group organizing this effort (The Oakland Firesafe Council) has hired a consulting team and an attorney to draft the MOU and they have asked that each participating entity contribute to the cost of managing the creation of this MOU. Oakland's proposed share is six thousand dollars (\$6,000) and the Oakland Fire Department has agreed to provide that funding.

The City of Oakland already has a grant agreement with The Oakland Firesafe Council, and this resolution recommends adding six thousand dollars (\$6,000) to that agreement and extending the grant agreement twelve (12) months to pay for this coordinating work.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The creation of this MOU acts as an alternative for partners within the Wildfire Prevention Working Group that wish to not be a part of the Joint Powers Authority Resolution #88838 to still

participate in wildfire prevention and vegetation management in the East Bay. These partners felt that a JPA surrounding this topic at this time would be unmanageable.

The creation of the MOU allows for a more coordinated approach and investment in wildfire prevention and vegetation management, which in turn will help to mitigate the number and severity of wildfire events. Regional coordination may prove both more effective and more efficient in developing and implementing best practices, as well as sharing expertise and other resources.

The East Bay Hills have lost more than 3,542 homes to major wildfires which is almost as many as all the high-risk Southern California Counties combined at the turn of this century, three years before the catastrophic fires that occurred in Southern California in 2003. Additionally, the Los Angeles basin was second with 21% and Santa Barbara County was third with 11%. The \$1.7 billion Oakland/Berkeley wildfire in 1991 was this nation's fifth most costly catastrophe. Table 1 below demonstrates that California ranks number one in states with the most wildfires and number of acres burned in 2021 and Table 2 shows that California ranks number one in states with the most homes at risk for extreme wildfire.

Table 1:

Top 10 States For Wildfires Ranked By Number Of Fires And By Number Of Acres Burned, 2021

Rank	State	Number of fires	Rank	State	Number of acres burned
1	California	9,260	1	California	2,233,666
2	Texas	5,576	2	Oregon	828,777
3	North Carolina	5,151	3	Montana	747,678
4	Montana	2,573	4	Washington	674,222
5	Florida	2,262	5	Arizona	524,428
6	Oregon	2,202	6	Idaho	439,600
7	Georgia	2,139	7	Alaska	253,357
8	Minnesota	2,065	8	Texas	168,258
9	Washington	1,863	9	Kansas	163,982
10	Arizona	1,773	10	New Mexico	123,792

Source: National Interagency Fire Center.

Table 2:

Homes At Risk For Extreme Wildfires, By State, 2022

Rank	State	Number of housing units
1	California	1,265,435
2	Florida	814,499
3	Texas	474,560
4	Colorado	319,799
5	New Mexico	120,438
6	Oregon	119,541
7	Arizona	119,231
8	Idaho	96,939
9	Alaska	84,862
10	Montana	80,694
11	Utah	65,024
12	Washington	51,841
13	South Dakota	24,294
14	Nevada	21,555
15	Wyoming	14,300
16	Oklahoma	1,473

Source: CoreLogic®, a property data and analytics company.

The policy recommendation in this report advances the Citywide goals of **Holistic Safe Community**.

FISCAL IMPACT

In amending this agreement, the City Council agrees to increase its existing grant agreement with The Oakland Firesafe Council from One Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000) To One Hundred and Thirty-One Thousand Dollars (\$131,000) from the Oakland Fire Department's budget.

Additional funding of six thousand dollars (\$6,000) will be withdrawn from the General-Purpose Fund (1010), Emergency Services Organization (20711), Administrative Project (1000009), and Office of Emergency Services Program (PS21).

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The City of Oakland is working with The Oakland Firesafe Council, a grassroots community-based organization dedicated to mobilizing the people of Oakland and Alameda County to reduce the risks of wildfire danger to people and property.

COORDINATION

The City Administrator's Office collaborated with the Oakland Fire Department in preparation of this report and resolution.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: In adopting this resolution, Oakland will participate in helping to mitigate the number and severity of wildfire events, which will reduce the potential disaster costs and economic impacts of these events.

Environmental: Mitigating the number and severity of wildfire events will protect Oakland's physical environment and infrastructure from damage.

Race & Equity: This resolution will help ensure the safety of Oakland residents living in or near high wildfire risk zones. Additionally, in mitigating wildfires, frontline residents that are disproportionately affected by climate change will not be impacted by wildfire smoke as frequently or severely.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Amending Resolution No. 89376 CMS, Which Awarded A Grant To The Oakland Firesafe Council To Fund Coordination On Emergency Preparedness And Response, By: (1) Increasing The Total Grant Amount By Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000) From One Hundred And Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000) To One Hundred And Thirty-One Thousand Dollars (\$131,000) To Support Regional Intergovernmental Wildfire Prevention Efforts; And (2) Correct The Name Of The Grant Recipient From “Firesafe Council” to “The Oakland Firesafe Council”

For questions regarding this report, please contact Joe DeVries, Deputy City Administrator, at (510) 238-3083.

Respectfully submitted,



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