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CITY OF OAKLAND
AGENDA REPORT

To: Office of the City Administrator
Attn: Deborah Edgerly
From: Fire Department
Date: April 25, 2006

Re: INFORMATIONAL REPORT OUTLINING THE 2005–2006 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES OF THE OAKLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT, FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU, AND THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION ASSESSMENT DISTRICT CITIZENS’ ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AND THE SUBMISSION OF THE 2006–2007 ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN.

SUMMARY

The following informational report has been prepared outlining the 2005 - 2006 vegetation management and hazardous fuel reduction projects of the Fire Department / Fire Prevention Bureau / Vegetation Management Unit and the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Citizens’ Advisory Committee.

The Preliminary 2006–2007 Vegetation Management Plan is also attached to this informational report for public review and comment.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact from this report. For FY 2006–2007, the City anticipates revenues of approximately \$1.7 million from the WPAD. WPAD revenues are used to fund fire suppression, prevention, and preparedness services and programs in the Oakland Hills.

Funding for the WPAD is made available in the Budget Office as part of the FY 2006–2007 adopted budget and departmental budget request FY 2006–2007 in the WPAD fund (#2321) in the Office of the Fire Marshal (org # 20311), Fire Prevention Bureau Program (PS23).

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District and the Oakland Fire Department (OFD) is to reduce the risk of fire in the Oakland Hills. The 10-year goal is to establish and implement a strategic, cost effective, sustainable, and environmentally-sensitive fuel management plan.

By removing the build-up of non-native vegetation from the critical areas throughout the high fire hazard area, strategic fuel breaks are created. These fuel break systems can be used to compartmentalize and dampen fire progression patterns across large expanses of wildland, thus transforming them into more manageable fire control areas.

The result is the creation of a fire-resistant community and defensible spaces (places that are less prone to burn because of precautions taken ahead of time). Information is provided to the property owners and community, not only on how to abate their properties, but how they can replant their vegetation with less maintenance and less flammability.

The WPAD and OFD have two primary goals:

- Provide education, inspection, and if necessary, enforcement of non-City owned properties within the WPAD (private, nonprofit, institutional, other agency)
- Provide funding for vegetation management on City-owned properties within the WPAD

Prior to of formally prioritizing the work that is undertaken in the WPAD, the Citizens' Advisory Committee and OFD/FPB agreed on the following components for determining risk assessment and risk management:

- Public safety – protection of lives
- Protection of structures
- Egress and ingress routes
- Fuel load
- Population density
- Slope and terrain
- Diablo wind corridors, natural chimneys
- Social factors and human behaviors

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

The goals of the program are to: establish and implement a strategic, cost-effective, sustainable, environmentally-sensitive fuel management plan; have knowledgeable and involved property owners, developers, and the public-at-large using fire-safe practices; enhance cooperation and communication with the community, City, other agencies, and neighboring districts; establish and refine policies, procedures, and regulations that improve fire safety.

GOALS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2005

- To start the process to create a strategic fuel break system that can be used to compartmentalize and dampen fire progression patterns across large expanses of wildland, transforming them into more manageable fire control areas.
- To remove the build-up of non-native vegetation from the critical areas throughout the high fire hazard area. This would be achieved by working collaboratively with other large property stakeholders including the East Bay Regional Park District, U.C. Berkeley, PG & E, Oakland Unified School District, Cal Trans, and East Bay Municipal Utility District.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2005

Property Inspection Program

Vegetation Management Inspections:

- 100% of all improved and unimproved properties were inspected
- Up to 94% compliance achieved by season's end
- Only 4 fires – small and contained
- Inspectors given authority to issue parking citations throughout the WPAD
- Joint inspections by FPB and Firefighters in the Engine Companies

| Wildfire Prevention Assessment District Parcel Statistics | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| WPAD Parcels | District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | Total as of 12/31/2005 |
| Total Number of Parcels | 5,070 | 5,429 | 5,217 | 9,619 | 25,335 |
| In Compliance | 5,060 | 5,143 | 4,721 | 8,485 | 23,409 |
| Out of Compliance | 10 | 286 | 496 | 1,134 | 1,926 |
| Improved Private Parcels | 4,121 | 4,694 | 4,479 | 8,759 | 22,053 |
| In Compliance | 4,121 | 4,509 | 4,303 | 7,895 | 20,828 |
| Out of Compliance | 0 | 185 | 176 | 864 | 1,225 |
| Unimproved Private Parcels | 755 | 611 | 468 | 608 | 2,442 |
| Private Parcels In Compliance | 748 | 538 | 265 | 437 | 1,988 |
| Out of Compliance | 7 | 73 | 203 | 171 | 454 |
| City Parcels | 56 | 84 | 239 | 199 | 578 |
| In Compliance | 55 | 82 | 143 | 130 | 410 |
| Out of Compliance | 1 | 2 | 96 | 69 | 168 |
| Public Entity Parcels | 138 | 44 | 31 | 82 | 295 |
| In Compliance | 136 | 18 | 11 | 52 | 217 |
| Out of Compliance | 2 | 26 | 20 | 30 | 78 |
| Total Number of Parcels Inspected | | | | | |
| | | | | | First Inspection |
| | | | | | 23,721 |
| | | | | | Second Inspection |
| | | | | | 1,614 |

Roadside Treatment

- Roadside treatment conducted on more than 50 linear miles of roadway located in the WPAD
- Because of the late rains, several roads had to be treated twice

Chipping Program

- Contracted with East Bay Conservation Corps to provide chipping services to private property owners within the Wildfire Prevention District. Funding for this service was provided by the District.
- Over 300 homes requested and received the chipping services
- Estimated cost \$150 per service request

Goat Grazing

- Contracted with Eco-Systems to provide more than 4,000 goats (Reso. No. 77892 C.M.S)
- Goats cleared hazardous fuels on more than 400 acres of grasslands
- Estimated cost of \$563 per acre

Public Outreach and Wildfire Prevention Education

- Added Public Outreach Coordinator to FPB staff
- 14 presentations
- Redesigned the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District website
- Four articles appeared in the media regarding fire prevention efforts in the WPAD
- Responded to 1,667 vegetation management service request calls between May 31 December 31, 2005.

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHTS

Large land owner agreements: FPB is working closely with the other large public entity property owners, such as Cal Trans, PG & E, EBMUD, and East Bay Regional Park District to reduce fuel loads, create emergency vehicle access if needed in the event of a fire, and to maintain roadside clearance around property perimeters.

Private Contract Work – U.C. Berkeley / WPAD partnership projects:

- Removal of re-growth eucalyptus
- Removal of invasive non-native brush
- Use of a fuel management strategy that promotes a natural forest conversion
- In 2004, 3780 eucalyptus stems were removed and 104 acres were treated
- Strawberry Canyon Vegetation Management Projects 1 and 2
- Frowning Ridge Vegetation Management Projects 1 and 2
- Fuel/Fire Break Project

- Gwinn Canyon Project removal of re-growth eucalyptus
- Claremont Canyon Conservancy roadside treatment project
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Shepherd Canyon Fuel Break Project.
- Remote Automatic Weather Station Replacement Project
- Shepherd Canyon Foot Trail Construction Project.

2006 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Inspection Objectives

- Conduct inspections on City-owned parcels (April start)
- Conduct inspections on un-improved properties (May start)
- Work with large property/public entity partners to determine parcels to be treated, treatment level, and schedule (on-going)
- Follow-up on inspection process (on-going)
- Respond to complaints and customer issues (on-going)
- Increase pressure on the “Non-Compliant”
- Enforce codes and ordinances
- Utilize “the eyes and ears of the community” – use them as assets – promote them and relationships with them “each one, teach one.” Turn our “squeaky wheels” into assets.
- Reduce the number of re-inspections required
- Increase the rate of “In Compliance”

Administrative Goals

- Maintain all records – so information is complete, thorough, and timely, and that historical records exist as a coherent history of issues and actions
- Address citizen concerns and problems with personal contact and written response
- Utilize all forms of technology to their utmost – database, “Magic Help Desk,” Hotline, etc.
- Increased attention and importance of timelines, goals, assignments, and follow through – with the necessary authority to responsible party (if you are tasked with an item, you are *responsible for it to completion, and you have authority to take action*)
- Increased communication among all members in unit to reduce overlap, increase responsibility, and learn from each new challenge
- Define measurable deliverables to increase effectiveness
- Be more proactive and less reactive

Overall Objectives – Continuing

- Protection of values and lives – reduce the risk of fire, loss of life, and property
- Reduce the danger of a “Big One” – less intensity, fewer fires, contain more rapidly, move more slowly – via defensible space, fuel reduction, fire breaks, etc.
- Public education to help create fire safe and fire resistant communities
- Enhance and maintain partnerships with large property owners / public entities
- Act in observance and compliance with environmental issues and concerns
- Take action on violations and implement lien procedures as necessary
- Increase public awareness and understanding – ensure the entire decision-making process makes sense to property owners, and is based on the goal to protect lives and structures
- Enhance the existing fuel/fire break from 1991

The combined efforts described above will be re-emphasized in 2006. The most important aspect for 2006 is the extremely positive relationship that has been established with the community and the large parcel owners within the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District.

The creation of the 2006 Vegetation Management Plan will serve as a road map for the OFD/FPB and the Wildfire Prevention District Citizens’ Advisory Committee as they continue toward the goal of making the Oakland Hills fire safe.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic

There are no direct economic impacts associated with this report.

Environmental

The management strategy proposed by this project promotes a forest conversion: 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 reduced.

The native species produce either considerably lesser fuel loads or are most fuel-productive well before the peak of the regional fire season.

Social Equity

A fire safe and healthy environment benefits the entire city.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR ACCESS

There are no ADA or senior citizen access issues contained in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Public Safety Committee accept this report

Respectfully submitted



DANIEL D. FARRELL
Fire Chief

Reviewed by: James A. Williams
Deputy Chief / Fire Marshal

Prepared by: LeRoy Griffin
Assistant Fire Marshal

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


City Administrator

**THE BACKUP MATERIAL FOR
ITEM NUMBER 8
IS AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING IN THE
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK, CITY OF
OAKLAND, ONE FRANK H. OGAWA
PLAZA, OAKLAND, CA 94612**

**THE DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE
ON**

WWW.Oaklandnet.Co/WildfirePrevention/Vegetation.htm

**LaTonda Simmons
City Clerk and
Clerk of the City Council**