

FILED  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND

**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
AND THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

2009 MAY 14 PM 4:25

*AGENDA REPORT*

**To:** Office of the Agency Administrator  
**Attn:** Dan Lindheim  
**From:** Community and Economic Development Agency  
**Date:** May 26, 2009

**RE: An Agency Resolution Authorizing a \$48,000 Grant from the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund to GRID Alternatives, a Nonprofit Organization Dedicated to Promoting Renewable Energy, to Install Solar Panels on Low-Income Housing Units within the West Oakland Project Area.**

---

### **SUMMARY**

This is a request for the Redevelopment Agency (Agency) approval of a resolution authorizing a \$48,000 grant from the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area's Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund to GRID Alternatives to install solar electric systems on a minimum of four housing units owned and occupied by low-income households, within the boundaries of the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area. The solar installation projects would occur in 2009.

The installation of solar electric systems on these properties will reduce housing costs for low-income households within the Redevelopment Project Area. Staff recommends that the Agency approve this resolution.

### **FISCAL IMPACTS**

Approval of the proposed resolution will authorize a \$48,000 Agency grant to GRID Alternatives. Funding is available from the West Oakland portion of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund (9580), Housing Development Organization (88929), Housing Development Project (P209310), West Oakland Redevelopment Program (SC06).

### **BACKGROUND**

GRID Alternatives is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting renewable energy. Since 2001, GRID Alternatives has been working to bring the power of solar electricity and energy efficiency to low-income homeowners, and to provide community members with training and hands-on experience with renewable energy technologies. Their mission is to empower communities in need by providing renewable energy and energy efficiency services, equipment, and training. GRID Alternatives works collaboratively with communities and local organizations to identify specific needs and to develop renewable energy solutions that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

GRID Alternatives was founded during the 2001 California energy crisis by Erica Mackie, P.E., and Tim Sears, P.E., two engineering professionals who were implementing renewable energy

Item: \_\_\_\_\_  
CED Committee  
May 26, 2009

systems for the private sector. They wanted to develop a model to make this technology practical for low-income communities, where households were most adversely affected by high energy prices and utility rate shocks and where neighborhoods were often the location of polluting fossil-fuel power plants. This model became GRID Alternatives' flagship Solar Affordable Housing Program, which trains and leads teams of volunteers from the community to install solar electric systems with both affordable housing providers and individual low-income homeowners in Northern and Southern California.

Since piloting this program in 2004, GRID Alternatives has installed 182 solar electric systems for low-income homeowners. These systems will generate over \$3 million worth of clean, renewable power for their low-income clients over the systems' projected lifespans, while reducing 9,106 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, the equivalent of planting 12,709 trees. They have also provided community volunteers with training and opportunities for hands-on experience with solar electric installation, and they partner with local job training providers serving low-income communities to help local community members gain experience and employment in the rapidly growing solar installation industry.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

GRID Alternatives will identify a minimum of four owner-occupied properties within the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area that are suitable for their Solar Affordable Housing Program. Together with a team of trained volunteers, GRID Alternatives will help these low-income homeowners install solar electric systems on their homes.

To be eligible, properties must meet the following criteria:

- Property is owner-occupied;
- Total household income is less than 80% of the area median;
- Total household liquid assets are less than \$25,000;
- Roof is unshaded and either flat or pitched to the south/southwest;
- Household must be willing to make an economic investment in the property by financing necessary home improvements, such as the replacement of a failing roof, if needed; and
- Household must be willing to make a "sweat equity" investment in the property by providing over 32 hours of volunteer labor before and/or during the installation process.

GRID Alternatives' outreach staff will identify potential clients through broad based community outreach, which will include community presentations at local institutions and to service providers, as well as flyering and other direct outreach methods. Grid Alternatives will institute an open and competitive process to select households. City staff will be responsible for certifying the income level of each participating household to ensure that their household income is less than 80% of the area median income, as required by the program.

The grant funds will be used to pay for the hardware costs for the a minimum of four systems – solar panels, electric inverter, racking, and related hardware. The size, orientation, and electrical

usage levels of the properties will determine the actual equipment needs, and GRID Alternatives will work with their existing network of solar equipment wholesalers and manufacturers to obtain the best possible pricing for each installation. The final dollar amount of the proposed grant will be based on this pricing, with no markup charged by GRID Alternatives.

### **KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS**

GRID Alternatives made a presentation to the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area Committee (“WOPAC”) on August 22, 2008 requesting \$48,000 in funding to provide solar electric installations at a minimum of four homes that are owned and occupied by low income households within the Redevelopment Project Area boundaries. The WOPAC approved the funding proposal and requested that staff take the item before the Agency for approval.

The Agency grant will not exceed \$48,000 and funds will be used for materials only. The total budget of the project is \$100,920. The Agency’s grant will be used along with funds from the City’s Home Maintenance and Improvement Program (HMIP) and California Solar Initiative rebates through PG&E. The Agency will execute a grant agreement with GRID Alternatives that will outline the terms of the grant disbursement.

The use of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund for this project is consistent with the West Oakland Redevelopment Plan and 2008-2013 Five Year Implementation Plan. The proposed project is eligible for this funding since it will result in a reduction in housing costs for low-income households. The grant will require no long term affordability restrictions due to the limited amount of rehabilitation being performed to each home.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Environmental:*** The installation of these solar electric systems will generate clean, renewable power and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

***Economic:*** The installation of solar electric systems on properties owned by low income households will reduce their housing costs.

***Social Equity:*** The goal of the GRID Alternatives projects is to empower communities in need by providing renewable energy and energy efficiency services, equipment, and training.

### **DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS**

This project is available to qualified persons with disabilities and to seniors.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE**

Staff recommends that the Agency accept the WOPAC's recommendation to provide a \$48,000 grant to GRID Alternatives to complete solar electric installations at a minimum of four homes that are owned and occupied by low income households within the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area. This work will help to reduce the housing costs for those low-income households.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY/CITY COUNCIL**

It is requested that the attached Agency resolution be approved providing a \$48,000 grant from the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area's portion of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund to GRID Alternatives for the proposed installation of solar electric equipment on a minimum of four homes in West Oakland.

Respectfully submitted,



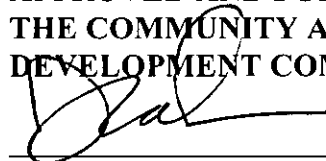
Walter S. Cohen, Director  
Community and Economic Development Agency

Reviewed by:   
Sean Rogan, Deputy Director  
Housing & Community Development

Reviewed by:   
Meghan Horl,  
Acting Housing Development Manager

Prepared by:   
Leslie Mullins  
Housing Development Coordinator III

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO  
THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**




Office of the Agency Administrator

Item: \_\_\_\_\_  
CED Committee  
May 26, 2009

FILED  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND

2009 MAY 14 PM 4:26

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

  
AGENCY COUNSEL

## REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND

RESOLUTION No. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

---

**AN AGENCY RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A \$48,000 GRANT FROM THE LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING FUND TO GRID ALTERNATIVES, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY, TO INSTALL SOLAR PANELS ON LOW-INCOME HOUSING UNITS WITHIN THE WEST OAKLAND PROJECT AREA**

**WHEREAS**, the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area contains low-income households struggling with on-going housing affordability; and

**WHEREAS**, GRID Alternatives is nonprofit organization that trains and leads teams of volunteers from the community to install solar electric systems with both affordable housing providers and individual low-income homeowners; and

**WHEREAS**, the solar electric installation projects result in the reduction of housing costs for low-income households; and

**WHEREAS**, GRID Alternatives presented a proposal to the West Oakland Project Area Committee ("WOPAC") on August 22, 2008 requesting a grant of \$48,000 to assist with solar installation projects on residential properties owned and occupied by low-income households within the Project Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the WOPAC approved a motion to support this funding request; and

**WHEREAS**, the rehabilitation of low-income housing is consistent with and will further the purposes of the West Oakland Redevelopment Plan and its 2008-2013 Five-Year Implementation Plan adopted on November 18, 2008 (Resolution No. 2008-0098 C.M.S.); and

**WHEREAS**, Section 33334.2 of the California Community Redevelopment Law authorizes a redevelopment agency to use its Low and Moderate Income Housing Funds to rehabilitate housing for and provide subsidies to low and moderate income households; and

**WHEREAS**, the Agency wishes to support GRID Alternatives by providing a grant of \$48,000 from West Oakland project funds to GRID Alternatives for use on residential properties owned and occupied by low-income households within the Project Area boundaries; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Agency hereby authorizes a grant of \$48,000 to GRID Alternatives from the West Oakland Redevelopment Project Area's portion of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund (9580), Housing Development Organization (88929), Housing Development Project (P209310), West Oakland Redevelopment Program (SC06) to complete solar electric installations at a minimum of four homes that are owned and occupied by low income households within the Project Area; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That the making of the grant shall be contingent on and subject to such other appropriate terms and conditions as the Agency Administrator or his or her designee may establish; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That the Agency has independently reviewed and considered this environmental determination, and the Agency finds and determines that this action complies with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") because the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 (minor alterations to existing facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That the Agency Administrator or his or her designee is authorized to conduct negotiations, execute a grant agreement, and take any other actions with respect to the grant consistent with this Resolution and its basic purpose.

IN AGENCY, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, \_\_\_\_\_, 2009

**PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

AYES- KERNIGHAN, NADEL, QUAN, DE LA FUENTE, BROOKS, REID, KAPLAN, AND  
CHAIRPERSON BRUNNER

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

LATONDA SIMMONS  
Secretary, Redevelopment Agency  
of the City of Oakland