CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

TO:	Elizabeth Lake Acting City Administrator	**FROM:**	Liam Garland Director, Public Works
SUBJECT:	Vegetation Management Services Contract Agreement	**DATE:**	June 22, 2026

City Administrator Approval Betsy Lake (Jun 29, 2026 17:54:30 PDT) Date: Jun 29, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Award A Contract To Native Soil, Inc. For Vegetation Management Services In The Wildfire Prevention Zone, With An Initial Three-Year Term From September 1, 2026, Through August 31, 2029, In An Amount Not To Exceed Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars ($2,700,000), With Two Options To Extend The Contract For One Additional Year Each In An Amount Not To Exceed Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars ($900,000) Per Option Year, For A Total Contract Amount Not To Exceed Four Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($4,500,000) Over A Maximum Five-Year Term, Subject To Council-Appropriated Funds; And Adopting California Environmental Quality Act Findings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Oakland conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) process for vegetation management services within the Wildfire Prevention Zone, which includes approximately 600 acres of city-owned property and 300 miles of public right-of-way. Three bids were received, and Native Soil, Inc., a Small Local Business Enterprise (S/LBE), was selected as the most qualified bidder.

This work is funded through Measure MM, the Oakland Public Works (OPW) Parks & Division budget. Approval of the proposed resolution will increase the City's capacity to reduce surface fuel loads by removing brush, pruning woody plants, and clearing organic debris

REASON FOR URGENCY

Approval of this item is necessary to avoid delays in implementing critical vegetation management services within the Wildfire Prevention Zone during the peak wildfire season. Delaying consideration until a future Public Works and Transportation Committee meeting would postpone the City's ability to begin essential fuel reduction, brush clearing, roadside vegetation maintenance, and defensible space activities identified in the Oakland Vegetation Management

Plan (VMP). These services are critical to reducing wildfire risk, protecting residents and public infrastructure, maintaining emergency access, and supporting firefighter safety. Timely approval will allow Oakland Public Works to execute the contract immediately and begin work during the period of greatest wildfire risk, while ensuring Measure MM-funded services are implemented without unnecessary delay.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Wildfires are a natural part of California's landscape, and the potential risk of wildfires impacting communities in and adjacent to forested areas is at an all-time high. In recent years, California has experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history. The Oakland firestorm of 1991 was one of the largest urban wildfires in the Bay Area. The fire started on the border of Oakland and spread throughout the Oakland and Berkeley hills. Ultimately, twenty-five lives were lost, 150 people were injured, over fifteen hundred acres of land were burned, and over 3,000 homes were destroyed. The high winds, steep terrain, and heavy fuel load made fighting this historic blaze a major challenge. The economic loss from the fire was estimated at $1.5 billion.

On November 19, 2019, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 87940 C.M.S. declaring wildfire prevention a top priority for the City of Oakland, and the City Administrator established a Wildfire Prevention Working Group. This group consists of multiple City Departments working together to identify opportunities to reduce wildfire risk in Oakland's wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas designated by the State of California as Very High Fire Hazard Zones. These agencies include the Oakland Fire Department (OFD), Oakland Public Works (OPW), the Department of Transportation (OakDOT), the Planning and Building Department (PBD), the Oakland Police Department (OPD), and the City Administrator's Office.

In May 2024, the City Council adopted the Oakland Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and mitigate potential damage. The implementation of the VMP involves thinning, pruning, removal, and other modifications to trees and vegetation within the established Wildfire Prevention Zone to reduce the likelihood of a wildfire and to minimize or slow its spread, should one occur. The City identified the following primary goals to guide the preparation of the VMP and its implementation:

- Reduce wildfire hazards on City-owned land and along critical access/egress routes within the Wildfire Prevention Zone;
- Reduce the likelihood of ignitions and extreme fire behavior to enhance public and firefighter safety;
- Implement practices to avoid or minimize impacts to natural resources; and
- Maintain an active role in regional efforts to reduce wildfire hazards in the Oakland Hills.

In November 2024, Oakland voters passed Measure MM to levy a special tax in the Wildfire Prevention Zone to fund the implementation of the VMP, including, but not limited to, vegetation management to reduce surface fuel loads by removing brush, pruning woody plants, and clearing organic debris.

Prior to the approval and implementation of Measure MM, the Mayor's Office, City Administration, and OFD requested operational support from OPW to address critical vegetation

management and brush clearing needs within the Wildfire Prevention Zone following the loss of funding for OFD landscape maintenance contractors. OPW responded by coordinating and performing vegetation abatement activities on City-owned properties identified as urgent fire safety hazards, working collaboratively with OFD leadership to manage scope, prioritization, and operational delivery. Based on OPW's demonstrated ability to efficiently manage vegetation clearing, maintenance operations, contractor coordination, and field implementation, City leadership and OFD formally transitioned primary responsibility for vegetation management functions within the VMP from OFD to OPW in 2025. This transition was intended to provide greater operational consistency, centralized expertise, regulatory compliance, and more effective long-term management of vegetation clearing, goat grazing, and ongoing maintenance activities in coordination with OFD fire prevention objectives.

The scope and scale of the required vegetation management work exceed OPW's current staffing capacity. Existing staff resources are insufficient to complete the necessary work within the required timeframe while maintaining ongoing operational responsibilities and service levels. Therefore, contracting these services is necessary to ensure the timely and effective completion of the vegetation management work.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

On February 7, 2026, Oakland Public Works (OPW) released the Vegetation Management Services request for proposals (RFP). This RFP was posted on the city's website and advertised in the city's official newspaper, in accordance with Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) 2.04.050.

The contract scope of work is for landscape maintenance services, per the VMP, to reduce fire hazards across approximately 600 acres of City-owned land and nearly 300 miles of public rights-of-way within the Wildfire Prevention Zone. The contract requires that the selected contractor monitor these lands and rights-of-way and mechanically reduce surface fuels as they arise. The contractor will provide a full range of landscape management and maintenance services, including, but not limited to:

- Clearing dry grass and overgrown plants to reduce fuel for wildfires.
- Creating defensible space around structures to slow fire spread.
- Installing firebreaks.
- Maintaining fire-resistant landscaping.
- Properly disposing of debris.
- Perform road median landscape maintenance with required traffic control procedures.
- Provide a monthly herbicide use report as required by the Department of Agriculture.

Herbicide use will be limited and will comply with the City's Integrated Pest Management policies: Resolution No. 59482 C.M.S., Resolution No. 73968 C.M.S., Resolution No. 79133 C.M.S., and Resolution No. 76254 C.M.S.

On March 27, 2026, the city received three (3) bid proposals in response to the RFP. A panel of three qualified OPW staff members with experience in the scope of work identified in the RFP evaluated the submittals. The following evaluation criteria were used as set forth in the RFP:

- Relevant experience
- Cost proposal

- S/LBE requirement of 50%

Based on the panel's evaluation of these criteria, a recommendation was made that Native Soil, Inc., a woman-owned small local business enterprise (S/LBE), was deemed most qualified to perform the vegetation management services described in the RFP. In addition to their proposal, Native Soil has demonstrated its qualifications and expertise through the successful performance of multiple contracts with the City, including maintenance services for Mandela Parkway and the installation of irrigation systems in various parks. In addition, the firm has completed projects for the Oakland Unified School District and maintains contracts with private-sector clients, including technology companies and other commercial entities.

This work is being contracted out because its scope, frequency, and geographic distribution exceed the capacity of existing Parks & Tree Division staffing resources. Contracting these services provides the City with the specialized workforce, equipment, and operational flexibility necessary to implement the VMP at a larger scale and with greater consistency than could be achieved through City forces alone.

Under this contract, Native Soil, Inc. will perform ongoing vegetation management activities throughout the year, with work schedules adjusted to seasonal growth patterns, fire risk conditions, and operational priorities identified by City staff. Services will include routine fuel reduction, roadside and median vegetation maintenance, defensible space creation, invasive vegetation removal, firebreak maintenance, debris removal, and other vegetation management activities identified in the VMP. Work locations and priorities will be established and updated by OPW staff in coordination with the OFD.

OPW staff will provide overall contract administration, establish annual and seasonal work plans, issue site-specific work assignments, and conduct regular field inspections to verify performance. Native Soil will provide progress updates, maintain work records, and document completed work areas. Staff will monitor contractor performance through routine site inspections, review of work reports, tracking of treated acreage and linear miles, and verification that work is completed in accordance with contract specifications and applicable safety requirements.

Implementation of this contract is expected to reduce hazardous fuel loads, improve defensible space around City facilities and infrastructure, enhance access for emergency responders, and support the City's broader wildfire risk-reduction objectives. Progress will be measured through metrics such as acreage treated, miles of rights-of-way maintained, completion of priority treatment areas identified in the VMP, response time to identified hazards, and compliance with contract performance standards.

OPW staff will continue to coordinate regularly with OFD to ensure vegetation management activities align with wildfire prevention priorities and emerging risk conditions. Staff will provide periodic updates on completed work, treatment priorities, and program outcomes, and will make this information available to the public through regular reports and other public communications, as appropriate.

Policy Alternatives:

Alternative #	Perform the work using City staff only.
Pros	Avoids contract expenditures and utilizes existing City staff resources.

Cons	Current staffing levels and equipment are insufficient to maintain all required VMP treatment areas, resulting in reduced vegetation management coverage and increased wildfire risk.
Reason for not recommending	Existing staffing capacity is inadequate to perform the required work while maintaining other Parks & Tree Division responsibilities.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS: Oakland Vegetation Management Plan

Awarding this contract supports implementation of the VMP, which was adopted in 2024 to reduce wildfire hazards on City-owned properties and along critical access and evacuation routes within Oakland's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The VMP identifies ongoing vegetation management, fuel reduction, defensible space maintenance, and roadside vegetation treatment as essential strategies to reduce the likelihood of wildfire ignition and extreme fire behavior.

The contract will provide the workforce, equipment, and operational capacity necessary to implement recurring vegetation management activities identified in the VMP, including surface fuel reduction, invasive vegetation management, roadside maintenance, firebreak maintenance, and defensible space creation. These activities are intended to reduce hazardous fuel loads, improve emergency access, and enhance public and firefighter safety.

The VMP recognizes that vegetation is dynamic and requires ongoing maintenance to remain effective. By providing year-round vegetation management services, this contract supports the VMP's adaptive management approach and allows the City to respond to seasonal growth patterns, changing fire conditions, and priority treatment needs identified by OPW and OFD.

FISCAL IMPACT

Sufficient funds are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Biennial Adopted Budget for the vegetation management work included in this contract.

A breakdown of the appropriated project funding sources is included in Table 1:

Table 1: Project Funding Sources

Fund Source	Organization	Project	Program	Amount
2254 – Measure MM – Wildfire Protection Zone	30652 – Landscape Maintenance	1008068 – MEAS MM-OPW VEG MGMT CONTRCTS	AD01-Administration	$900,000/year

Expenditures are recurring throughout the contract. This contract will award Native Soils $900,000 annually for three years with the possibility of two (2) one-year extensions of $900,000 each, for a total amount not to exceed $4,500,000. There is no impact on the City's general-purpose funds. Utilization of these contracts is contingent upon the availability of Council-authorized appropriations and a funding availability analysis conducted by the Parks & Tree Division at the time of standard purchase order request submission or prior to fund

encumbrance. There is no minimum commitment to the proposed contracts, and funds will not be committed unless funding is identified.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach beyond the standard City Council agenda-noticing procedures was deemed necessary for the proposed contract award, as this action authorizes a professional services contract to implement activities already identified in the VMP, which was developed through a separate public planning and environmental review process.

OPW recognizes the significant public interest in wildfire prevention and vegetation management activities within the Wildfire Prevention Zone. Throughout the term of the contract, OPW will coordinate regularly with OFD to review treatment priorities, completed work, and emerging wildfire risks. This coordination will help ensure consistent communication with residents and property owners regarding vegetation management activities and wildfire preparedness efforts.

OPW will provide periodic updates to the Wildfire Prevention Commission on contract implementation, completed work, and program outcomes, which serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters related to wildfire prevention and implementation of the VMP. Staff will also make progress information available to the public through Commission meetings, City websites and dashboards, public reports, and other communication channels, as appropriate. These efforts will provide transparency regarding how contract funds are being utilized, the areas treated, and progress toward achieving the City's wildfire risk-reduction objectives.

COORDINATION

OPW prepared the requested action in coordination with OFD for vegetation management work assigned to OPW. This report and resolution were reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Native Soil, Inc. has successfully completed multiple contracts for the City of Oakland. Most recently, the firm completed Contract No. 2022008672 for landscape maintenance services from March 4, 2022, through March 22, 2024, with a contract value of $176,624. The City subsequently awarded Contract No. 2025004931, which is currently active through November 7, 2026, with a contract value of $126,720.

Throughout its work for the City, Native Soil has consistently met performance expectations for quality, responsiveness, schedule adherence, safety, regulatory compliance, and coordination with City staff. The firm has demonstrated the ability to complete assigned work on time and has maintained a positive working relationship with Oakland Public Works. Staff members are not aware of any significant performance issues, contract disputes, or compliance concerns associated with the firm's prior City contracts.

RACE AND EQUITY

A Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA) was completed as part of the development of the VMP and related Safety Element policies. The REIA recognized that environmental hazards, including wildfire, can disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including seniors, people with disabilities, renters, low-income residents, and others who may face greater challenges preparing for, responding to, or recovering from wildfire events.

The proposed contract advances implementation of the VMP by providing ongoing vegetation management services on City-owned properties and along public rights-of-way within the Wildfire Prevention Zone. These activities are intended to reduce hazardous fuel loads, improve emergency access, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire that could threaten residents, public infrastructure, and emergency responders. By funding these services through City resources, the City reduces the burden on individual property owners and supports a coordinated, citywide approach to wildfire risk reduction.

The contract also supports the City's equity goals by awarding work to Native Soil, Inc., a certified woman-owned S/LBE. OPW will track vegetation management activities, treatment locations, and program outcomes to help ensure that wildfire prevention resources are deployed in a manner consistent with Citywide safety and equity objectives.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The proposed contract supports implementation of the VMP, for which the City previously completed a comprehensive environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The VMP and its associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluated the potential environmental impacts of vegetation management activities within the Wildfire Prevention Zone and identified mitigation measures and monitoring requirements for implementing the plan.

The proposed contract does not authorize any new vegetation management activities beyond those previously analyzed and approved under the VMP. All work performed under the contract will be conducted in accordance with the VMP, applicable mitigation measures, permit requirements, and environmental regulations. Therefore, no additional environmental review is required because the contract constitutes implementation of a previously approved project for which CEQA review has been completed.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Award A Contract To Native Soil, Inc. For Vegetation Management Services In The Wildfire Prevention Zone, With An Initial Three-Year Term From September 1, 2026, Through August 31, 2029, In An Amount Not To Exceed Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars ($2,700,000), With Two Options To Extend The Contract For One Additional Year Each In An Amount Not To Exceed Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars ($900,000) Per Option Year, For A Total Contract Amount Not To Exceed Four Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($4,500,000) Over A Maximum Five-Year Term, Subject To Council-Appropriated Funds; And Adopting California Environmental Quality Act Findings.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kristin Hathaway, Public Works Assistant Director, at 510-238-7571.

Respectfully submitted,

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