



City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Loma Rica Open Space Fuel Reduction Project

CEQA: Exempt under CEQA Guideline §15304, Categorical Exemption Class 4 (“Minor Alterations to Land”)

Recommendation: That Council authorize the advertisement for bids for the Loma Rica Open Space Fuels Reduction Project.

Prepared by: Tim Kiser, City Manager

Council Meeting Date: 04/08/2025

Date Prepared: 04/04/2025

Agenda: Consent

Background Information: At its meeting on November 12, 2024, the City Council authorized staff to accept the dedication of open space land across the Loma Rica Ranch property. This land dedication is intended to enhance the City’s ability to protect and manage the natural, scenic, historical, and conservation values of the area, while also supporting future trail development and land improvement projects.

The newly acquired City-owned open space encompasses approximately 200 acres of heavily forested land with dense underbrush. To mitigate wildfire risk and improve overall forest health, a hazardous fuel reduction project is proposed. The project will involve the selective removal of surface fuels, brush and shrubs, live trees under 10 inches in diameter at breast height, and other ladder fuels that contribute to the ignition and spread of wildfire. Vegetation removal will be achieved through a combination of mechanical mastication, hand crew cutting, chipping, and mulching.

The primary goals of the project are to:

- Disrupt vertical and horizontal fuel continuity;
- Reduce the intensity and spread of potential wildfires;
- Enhance ingress and egress for emergency response; and
- Restore a healthy, park-like forest condition that is more fire-resilient.

Vegetation in the treatment area is best described as a mixed conifer forest with a manzanita understory. Residual trees will be pruned to a height of approximately 8 to 10 feet. Dead trees of any size may be felled and chipped, masticated, or mulched. The resulting material may be scattered on site in a manner consistent with habitat preservation, burned using an air curtain burner (with appropriate permits), or removed for offsite processing.

Environmental protection measures will be strictly observed. All activities will avoid watershed areas within 50 feet of Whitewater Creek, Wolf Creek, their tributaries, or any

blue line waterways, including irrigation ditches, as identified on current USGS 7.5-minute topographic maps. Areas located within FEMA-designated flood zones will be treated using hand tools only. Known archaeological or cultural resources will be avoided, and if any such resources are discovered during operations, work in the area will cease until a qualified cultural resource specialist provides further guidance.

The Loma Rica Open Space Fuel Reduction Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4 (“Minor Alterations to Land”).

The total project cost is estimated at \$400,000. Bid documents are available for public review at City Hall. Staff anticipates awarding a contract in Spring 2025, with fuel reduction work to commence shortly thereafter.

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the public bidding process for this project.

Council Goals/Objectives: The Loma Rica Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project works towards achieving/maintaining the 2022 Strategic Plan Update: Community Safety and City Infrastructure Investment.

Fiscal Impact: Measure B Funds are anticipated to be used to hire a contractor to prepare a hazardous fuel treatment prescription and carry out treatment of the City-owned Loma Rica Open Space parcels. This will be subject to Measure B oversight committee and City Council approval prior to the award of this project.

Funds Available: Yes

Account #: 207-102-51110

Reviewed by: ____ City Manager

Attachments: Project Area Maps

Location Project Maps

