



City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Loma Rica Open Space Fuels Reduction Project

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

Recommendation: That Council 1) find that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and 2) authorize the advertisement for bids for the fuel treatment prescription for the Loma Rica Open Space parcels acquired by the City of Grass Valley and other City owned properties adjacent to the Loma Rica Open Space Parcels.

Prepared by: Amy Wolfson, City Planner

Council Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

Date Prepared: February 18, 2025

Agenda: Consent

Background Information: At the City Council meeting held November 12, 2024, Council authorized staff to accept the Open Space Land across the Loma Rica Ranch property. The open space land dedication is anticipated to better serve the community by giving the City greater ability to enforce the protection of the natural, scenic, historical, and conservation values of the Open Space area and to enact future trail and land improvements.

The City-owned Open Space area is heavily forested with dense underbrush. The hazardous fuel reduction project will consist of reducing brush/shrubs, live trees less than 10-inches diameter at breast height, and surface fuels to reduce wildfire ignition and spread risks. Operations will consist primarily of mechanical mastication, cutting by hand crews, chipping, and mulching. The intent of the fuel reduction project is to eliminate the vertical and horizontal continuity of understory fuels, surface fuels, and crown fuels to improve ingress and egress, minimize fire behavior in the event of a wildfire, and to improve forest health. The project areas are approximately 200 acres in size. The project areas range in elevation from approximately 2,620 to 2,800 feet above sea level. Vegetation at the site would best be described as mixed conifer with a manzanita understory. Hand work for chipping will be conducted by hand crews using chainsaws, Mcleods, brush grubbers and other appropriate hand tools. Residual trees will be pruned to a height of approximately 8 to 10-feet above ground level. Dead trees of any size may be felled and chipped, masticated, or mulched. Masticated, mulched, or chipped material may be left on site and scattered in zones compatible with pre-existing habitat zones. Wood, chips, and brush may be burned with an air curtain burner or similar device with appropriate permits or hauled offsite for processing. Any known archeological or cultural resources will be avoided. If suspected archeological or cultural resources are discovered during fuel management activities, the area will be secured and avoided until a cultural resource specialist can assess the potentially sensitive resource and provide recommendations on appropriate treatment. All vegetative fuel treatment will avoid watershed areas within 50-feet of Whitewater Creek, Wolf Creek, its tributaries, or any

other blue line waterway, including irrigation ditches, shown on a current United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map. Areas located within any mapped flood zone as depicted on a FEMA Fire Insurance Rate Map will be treated with hand tools only. The reduction in vegetation will create an open and parklike shaded fuel break condition that will minimize fire behavior and create a stand structure that is resistant to fast-spreading fire.

Council Goals/Objectives: The Loma Rica Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project works towards achieving/maintaining 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 award of this project.

Funds Available: Yes **Account #:** Measure B **Reviewed by:** City Manager

Attachments:

Notice of Exemption - Loma Rica Open Space Fuel Management Project