



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 08/20/2019

ITEM NO: 8

DATE: August 14, 2019
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Authorize a FY 2019/20 Expenditure Budget Adjustment in the Amount of \$300,707 for the Vegetation Management – Town Wide Project

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize a FY 2019/20 expenditure budget adjustment in the amount of \$300,707 for the Vegetation Management – Town Wide Project (832-4508).

BACKGROUND:

The Adopted FY 2019/20 – 2023/24 Capital Improvement Program includes \$200,000 for an ecological assessment to provide guidance for fuel removal in Town open spaces and rights-of-way, and funding for the first year of open space fuel reduction. The Town has since also applied for a grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for this and additional vegetation management work for a total proposed Town commitment of \$500,707. The total FEMA grant funding request of \$2,002,828 requires the Town to provide matching funds of 25% based on the grant requirements.

DISCUSSION:

The Town limits include properties that are located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), as determined by Cal Fire. The Town is also listed as a Community at Risk from wildfires on the Federal and California Fire Alliance list of Communities at Risk in Santa Clara County. Recent Northern California fires also demonstrate the ongoing wildfire risk to the Town. Given the Town's hillside locations, Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fires are a real and present danger to parts of Los Gatos. The Town seeks to work with a consultant to identify a land stewardship plan for hazardous fuel reduction and then perform the identified work, which is essential to decreasing the risk to life and property.

PREPARED BY: Bobby González
Senior Administrative Analyst

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

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DISCUSSION (continued):

Staff has identified five Town-owned parks and open spaces to be addressed through this grant:

- Heintz Open Space
- La Rinconada Park
- Novitiate Park
- Santa Rosa Open Space
- Worcester Park

Staff seeks to implement this project in a phased approach. In Phase 1, the Town would work with a consultant to prepare a land stewardship plan for hazardous fuel reduction, including the detailed project scope, methods, and equipment to be used. The plan would also provide for biological analysis to ensure the project minimizes the impact on native species.

In Phase 2, the Town would issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) based on the work identified in the plan identified above. The Town would award a contract to perform brush and vegetation management work in the open space areas that pose the greatest risk to life and property. The mitigation activities are expected to include the following activities and objectives:

- Establish shaded fuel breaks and defensible spaces surrounding structures;
- Reduce the height and density of existing stands of plant species of vegetation with adequate spacing between the shrubs to reduce the fire ladder effect;
- Remove non-native species and dead wood to further reduce the fuel loads and fuels buildup;
- Remove dead or deceased trees within the identified area of the project;
- Convert vegetation and wood fuel to shredded chip material evenly scattered over the ground. A mat of wood chip creates an immediate soil cover to protect the site from soil detachment and movement, thus avoiding downstream impacts to the watershed.
- Establish a long-term maintenance treatment program for the area once the initial treatment is complete.

The grant application was submitted to California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), the official applicant, on July 5th, 2019. Currently, CalOES is reviewing submitted applications and will select the most competitive applications to submit to FEMA by November 12, 2019. Based on grant requirements, the Town must identify and commit 25% of the match as a part of the application process.

The 2019/20 Capital Improvement Program Budget identifies \$200,000 for this work. To meet the match requirements for the grant, the project will need an additional \$300,707. Making the commitment to this match now allows for the grant application to be more competitive. If the

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DISCUSSION (continued):

grant application is unsuccessful, the additional funds revert to their original source(s) and the project's adopted budgeted funds would support the more limited fuel reduction work.

CONCLUSION:

Authorization of a FY 2019/20 expenditure budget adjustment in the amount of \$300,707 for the Vegetation Management – Town-wide Project (832-4508) allows the Town to remain eligible for a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grant that would fund important vegetation management work within the Town limits.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Council could forego adding funds to match the grant. With this alternative, staff would notify the grantor and withdraw the grant application.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Finance Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Adopted FY 2019/20 – 2023/24 Capital Improvement Program includes \$200,000 for this work or a grant match as mentioned in the project narrative. An additional \$300,707 is requested to meet the 25% match requirement. The source of the additional match is the General Fund Capital and Special Projects Reserve.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.