



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 08/06/2024

ITEM NO: 16

DATE: August 1, 2024

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508):

- a. Adopt the “Vegetation Management Plan for the Town of Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, California” Dated June 2021;
- b. Adopt the Findings of the Project Specific Analysis and Addendum to the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the California Vegetation Treatment Program, Including the Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program;
- c. Authorize the Town Manager to Execute an Agreement for Services with Sequoia Ecological Consulting in the Amount of \$181,165 for the Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508); and
- d. Authorize Revenue and Expenditure Budget Adjustments to the Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508) to Recognize Receipt and Expenditure of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMPG) Funds in the Amount of \$1,591,344.75 for the 75 Percent Federal Share of the Project Costs and \$35,974.97 for the 100 Percent Federal Share of Subrecipient Management Costs (SRMC).

RECOMMENDATION:

Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508):

- a. Adopt the “Vegetation Management Plan for the Town of Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, California” dated June 2021;

PREPARED BY: Nicolle Burnham
Parks and Public Works Director

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

RECOMMENDATION (continued):

- b. Adopt the Findings of the Project Specific Analysis and Addendum to the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the California Vegetation Treatment Program, including the Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program;
- c. Authorize the Town Manager to execute an Agreement for Services (Attachment 1) with Sequoia Ecological Consulting in the amount of \$181,165 for the Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508); and
- d. Authorize revenue and expenditure budget adjustments to the Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508) to recognize receipt and expenditure of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMPG) funds in the amount of \$1,591,344.75 for the 75 percent Federal share of the project costs and \$35,974.97 for the 100 percent Federal share of Subrecipient Management Costs (SRMC).

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Los Gatos has been working on developing and implementing a vegetation management program since 2020. To support this work, the Town was awarded funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for vegetation management in the Town-owned open spaces of La Rinconada Park, Worcester Park, Novitiate Park, Heintz Open Space, and Santa Rosa Open Space.

The FEMA grant was awarded in two phases: Phase 1 partially funded development of a document entitled "Vegetation Management Plan for the Town of Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, California" (the Plan) dated June 2021 (Attachment 4) and the associated environmental assessment which was completed in August 2023. Phase 2 funds the execution of the Plan. While FEMA awards grants in a full amount, the funding is not available to the grant recipient until FEMA formally "obligates" the money. FEMA obligates its grant funding by project phase so, although the grant award was made in late 2019, the Phase 2 funds were made available to the Town in fall of 2023. Attachment 2 is the FEMA award letter for Phase 2. In addition to the FEMA funding, the Town has allocated matching funds for the required 25 percent match.

DISCUSSION:

While vegetation management along roadsides and in certain high fire hazard areas can be performed under the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) of the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP). Portions of Los Gatos' open space areas identified for fire-related vegetation management are outside of the geographic area covered in the CalVTP. To address this, the CalVTP has been supplemented for Los Gatos through a Project Specific Analysis (PSA)

DISCUSSION (continued):

and Addendum to the PEIR (Attachment 3). With the Plan and environmental analysis complete, staff is recommending that Town Council formally adopt the Plan and CEQA findings.

The PEIR, PSA, and Addendum include biological monitoring of certain aspects of the vegetation management work to protect habitats within the open space areas. The need for this monitoring necessitated the services of a qualified biologist.

On May 31, 2024, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking the services of a qualified biologist to support environmental compliance during open space vegetation management. The request for proposals was posted on the BidNet bidding portal where it could be viewed by vendors nationally. The Town's on-call list of environmental consultants was also notified of the availability of the RFP. Proposals were due on June 27, 2024 and two submittals were received. After staff review of the proposals, Sequoia Ecological Consulting was found to be the most qualified company for this work. The second bidder did not provide complete documentation and did not appear to be qualified to perform the work.

The Phase Two grant revenue could not be recognized by the Town until the FEMA obligation was made per the letter in Attachment 2. With this Council action staff is recognizing the grant revenue so it can be allocated to the project and used to fund future work.

CONCLUSION:

With the requested Town Council action, the Town will formally adopt its Vegetation Management Plan and associated environmental analysis. These are key steps in the process to implementing the wildfire management work that has been identified as a priority.

Staff recommends awarding the agreement for biological monitoring of vegetation management in Town-owned Open Spaces to Sequoia Consulting Group and to recognize FEMA HMGP funds for the Vegetation Management – Townwide Open Spaces Project (CIP No. 832-4508). Awarding this contract is the next step in implementing the Vegetation Management Plan for the Town-owned open spaces.

COORDINATION:

This project has been coordinated with the Finance Department and with the Community Development Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal table below reflects the budget for Phase 2 of this project, including the requested FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds.

Vegetation Management - Town-wide CIP No. 832-4508		
	Budget	Costs
Phase 2 - Source of Funds		
GFAR	\$ 530,448	
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (Requested with this Staff Report)	\$ 1,627,320	
Total Budget	\$ 2,157,768	
		Costs
Phase 2 - Expenditures		
Consultant Services Agreement with Sequoia Ecological Consulting (Requested with this Staff Report)		\$ 181,165
Total Expenditures		\$ 181,165
Total Project Balance		\$ 1,976,603

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The Project Specific Analysis and Addendum concluded that all of the effects of the proposed project: (a) have been covered in the CalVTP PEIR; and (b) all applicable Standard Project Requirements and mitigation measures identified in the CalVTP PEIR will be implemented. The proposed project is, therefore, within the scope of the CalVTP PEIR. No additional CEQA documentation is required.

Attachments:

1. Agreement for Consultant Services with Exhibit A
2. Application Approval, HMGP DR-4407-506-75R
3. Los Gatos VMP CalVTP Addendum
4. Link to the Vegetation Management Plan for the Town of Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, California dated June 2021