

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: TRAVERS COLLINS, DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF  
SCOTT MOON, DIVISION CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
ANNA MCAULIFFE, RESEARCH AND PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR WILDFIRE  
PREPAREDNESS, MITIGATION AND RESILIENCY PROJECTS  
UTILIZING PG&E SETTLEMENT FUNDS

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Fire Department that Council, by resolution, authorize the Chief Financial Officer to appropriate the funds previously approved for the Fire Department from the PG&E settlement into two separate project accounts. One project in the amount of \$5,250,000 is to be allocated for the implementation of a comprehensive Vegetation Management Program and the second project in the amount of \$2,750,000 is to be allocated for the implementation of a Wildland Resiliency and Response Strategic Plan. Both projects are among the top seven highest priority projects related to wildfire preparedness, mitigation and resiliency.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fire Department is seeking approval to move forward with the funding of two of the seven highest priority projects as discussed with City Council during the February study session as well as a goal setting discussion.

The two projects, Implementation of a Comprehensive Vegetation Management Program and Implementation of Wildland Resiliency and Response Strategic Plan, are ready to begin pending funding availability.

BACKGROUND

In July 2020, the City received a \$95 million settlement from PG&E to recoup damages sustained from the 2017 Tubbs wildfire that were not recoverable through State, Federal, or insurance reimbursements. At Council direction, City staff solicited input from 2017 fire survivors and the community at large for input on proposed uses for the settlement

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money. In addition, staff worked internally to develop projects that could bolster the City's wildfire preparedness and make the City more resilient in the event of future wildfires.

On December 12, 2020, Council held a study session where staff presented the report. That report included approximately \$476 million of one-time capital needs.

Council reviewed the report and provided direction to staff to develop a prioritized list of the highest priority projects with an estimated total project cost near \$25 million.

On February 9, 2021, a study session was held at which staff presented the top seven highest priority projects.

#### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Staff presented four study sessions for the use of the PG&E settlement funds.

On November 17, staff presented the results of three virtual public input sessions and a Citywide digital survey providing public input for the use of the PG&E settlement funds.

On December 8, Council received a presentation on "Housing Investment Opportunities" for PG&E settlement funds.

On December 15, 2020, staff presented a report on the use of PG&E settlement funds for "Wildfire Preparedness, Mitigation and Resiliency Projects".

On February 9, 2021, staff presented the revised report showing the top seven highest priority projects.

#### ANALYSIS

##### **Implementation of a comprehensive Vegetation Management Program (\$5,250,000)**

In September of 2020 the City Council unanimously approved the final draft of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This plan, the first of its kind in our City, is the result of a community-wide planning effort to quantify and evaluate the wildfire threat to the City and develop hazard mitigation strategies that enhance protection of life safety and other community assets from wildfire. Using the latest wildfire science and community input this plan serves to guide the development and implementation of a comprehensive Vegetation Management Program. The Fire Department has proposed a five-year program in our effort to mitigate future wildfire threats to our City. The proposed program will focus on improving evacuation routes, community wildfire education, wildfire and evacuation preparedness, structural hardening of the built environment, vegetation treatments to reduce the wildfire threat, implementation of defensible space standards and increased staffing dedicated to the wildfire mitigation workload. As proposed this program will also provide annual updates to Council and at the conclusion of the five-year period will allow funding to complete an updated CWPP.

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	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Vehicles / Equipment</u>	<u>Services &amp; Supplies</u>	<u>Total</u>
Year 1 Projected Expenses	402,527	65,000	782,473	<b>1,250,000</b>
Year 2 Projected Expenses	414,603		585,397	<b>1,000,000</b>
Year 3 Projected Expenses	427,041		572,959	<b>1,000,000</b>
Year 4 Projected Expenses	650,985		349,015	<b>1,000,000</b>
Year 5 Projected Expenses	670,514		329,486	<b>1,000,000</b>
<b>Program Totals</b>	<b>2,565,670</b>	<b>65,000</b>	<b>2,619,330</b>	<b>5,250,000</b>

**Personnel:** (1) Building Plans Examiner & (1) Limited-Term Fire Inspector for years 1-3;  
 Add a second Limited-Term Fire Inspector for years 4 & 5

**Services & Supplies:** Chipper Program, Contract work, Home Hardening, Potential Grant Matching,  
 Education Materials, Signs

**Implementation of Wildland Resiliency and Response Strategic Plan (\$2,750,000)**

To improve the prevention, mitigation, and response capabilities of the Fire Department using current staffing and stations, staff recommends funding for implementation of the Santa Rosa Fire Department Wildland Resiliency and Response Strategic Plan. This plan was presented to the Public Safety Subcommittee on November 23, 2020 and is a holistic assessment of the Fire Department’s wildland fire programs with recommended adjustments to the organization across all bureaus. Implementation of this plan would provide additional resources to legislative efforts, community engagement and education, additional wildland firefighting apparatus and equipment. This plan does not address the need for additional personnel or fire stations; however, it would significantly improve the Fire Department’s capacity and abilities to prevent, mitigate, and respond to wildland fires using current staffing and fire stations.

	<u>Non-Capital Supplies</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Vehicles / Apparatus</u>	<u>Total</u>
Year 1 Projected Expenses	839,840	53,160		<b>893,000</b>
Year 2 Projected Expenses			1,857,000	<b>1,857,000</b>
<b>Program Totals</b>	<b>839,840</b>	<b>53,160</b>	<b>1,857,000</b>	<b>2,750,000</b>

**Non-Capital Supplies:** Pants, Jackets, Vests, Safety Equipment, Tools, Radios, Toughbooks, Hose  
 Nozzles, Generator

**Vehicles:** (2) Type Three Engines, (2) Type Six Engines, Water Tender, One Ton Pickup, Large Passenger  
 Van

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FISCAL IMPACT

The source of funds for these projects are the PG&E Settlement Funds which have been assigned in General Fund reserves. The use of these funds is one-time in nature and do not represent an ongoing impact to the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The appropriation of funds is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The Fire Department will evaluate future needs for necessary environmental review required by CEQA based on fuel mitigation projects as defined in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution

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