

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: COLIN CLOSE, SENIOR WATER RESOURCES PLANNER  
SANTA ROSA WATER  
SUBJECT: STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD GRANT  
FUNDS FOR FREEWAY WELL PLANNING PROJECT

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Board of Public Utilities and the Water Department that the Council, by resolution: 1) authorize the Director of Santa Rosa Water or designee to negotiate and execute a grant funding agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board for the Freeway Well Planning Project (Project); 2) authorize and designate the Director of Santa Rosa Water or designee as a City Representative for the Project; 3) authorize use of existing non-General Funds to match the State Funds being awarded; and 4) authorize the Chief Financial Officer to increase appropriations in the amount of the grant award.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City operated the groundwater well located at 1304 Cleveland Avenue in Santa Rosa (Freeway Well) sustainably for about 30 years, until regular testing in the 1980s detected volatile organic compounds (VOCs) had reached the well from offsite contamination. The City has wanted to evaluate water quality risks in the vicinity and study the feasibility of alternatives for treating the groundwater or replacing Freeway Well but has not had the resources to do so. The State Water Resources Control Board (State) expressed interest in providing assistance with these efforts and invited the City to submit a grant application. Legal counsel determined the City Manager was authorized to submit the application per *Council Policy No. 000-562: Grant Application and Administration Policy*. Staff provided a briefing to the Board of Public Utilities and submitted the application on August 31, 2017.

The application was successful, and the State has asked the City to designate, by resolution, a representative to negotiate and enter into a grant funding agreement for the Freeway Well Planning Project. Staff is also asking Council to authorize use of existing appropriations for the required matching funds and authorize the Chief Financial Officer to increase appropriations for the project in the amount of the grant

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award. This item relates to City Council Goal #3 - Provide leadership for environmental initiatives.

### BACKGROUND

The City constructed Freeway Well in 1957. The well was reportedly a high-producing well capable of supplying approximately 1 million gallons per day. The City operated Freeway Well sustainably for about 30 years (1950s-1980s), until regular testing in the 1980s detected volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In 1994, the Freeway Well was physically separated from the City's distribution system.

This well is important because approximately 90 to 95 percent of Santa Rosa's annual potable water supply is purchased from the Sonoma County Water Agency. Should the Water Agency's supplies become restricted or shut down due to an emergency, Santa Rosa would need an additional 7.1 million gallons per day (MGD) of emergency groundwater supply to meet current health and safety needs. To meet health and safety demands at buildout, the City would need an additional 4.9 MGD (a total of 12 MGD) of emergency groundwater supply.

The City's Groundwater Master Plan of September 2013 (GWMP) establishes policies and strategies to manage available groundwater resources in a sustainable manner for potential future beneficial uses, including emergency groundwater supply. The GWMP discusses a recommendation to potentially treat/remove volatile organic compounds currently in Freeway Well, or replace the well in kind, to ensure adequate emergency water supply, particularly for the northeast area of Santa Rosa. However, the City has not had the resources to evaluate water quality risks and opportunities in the vicinity of Freeway Well and study alternatives.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable

### ANALYSIS

The State expressed interest in providing assistance to the City for an investigation and feasibility study for Freeway Well and invited the City to submit a grant application. Legal counsel determined that the City Manager was authorized to submit the grant application per *Council Policy No. 000-562: Grant Application and Administration Policy*. The application was submitted on August 31, 2017, and staff provided a briefing to the Board of Public Utilities as this work is related to the Emergency Groundwater Supply Program discussed in the GWMP.

The City's grant proposal was successful, and the State has asked the City to designate, by resolution, an authorized representative to negotiate and enter into a funding agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board for the Project. Staff

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is also asking that Council authorize the use of matching funds from existing appropriations in the Water Department and authorize the Chief Financial Officer to increase appropriations in JL Key 55751, Freeway Well Planning Project, in the amount of the grant award.

The Project will examine Freeway Well and the area around it to more fully characterize the groundwater contamination problem, better understand the lithology and deep aquifer hydrology, and provide additional groundwater sampling and data analysis to develop alternatives for groundwater cleanup and/or groundwater protection.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

In its grant application, the City estimated the Project cost at \$977,866 and requested the maximum grant share (50 percent) and indicated the City would meet the required 50 percent match from existing Water Department appropriations (currently in JL Key 55523 – Groundwater Supply Program). The actual approved Project cost will be determined (and may change) based on contract negotiations between the City and State Water Resources Control Board, but will not exceed \$1 million total with 50 percent being grant funding and 50 percent being local match. Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), City Council adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) on September 19, 2013, for the Ground Water Master Plan, which included ground water testing as a component of the project. Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines identifies the threshold for requiring an update or addendum to an adopted CEQA document. There are no substantial changes in the project, no substantial changes in circumstances, and no new information of substantial importance. The scope of the originally adopted MND was such that there are no new or more severe adverse impacts associated with the proposal currently under consideration and no additional environmental review is necessary.

Further, this project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and qualifies for a Class 6 categorical exemption in that it involves basic data collection which would not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

#### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 1, 2018, the Board of Public Utilities approved, by resolution, a recommendation to the Council to: 1) authorize the Director of Santa Rosa Water or designee to negotiate and execute a grant funding agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board for the Freeway Well Planning Project (Project); 2) authorize and designate the Director of Santa Rosa Water or designee as a City representative

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for the Project; 3) authorize use of existing non-General Funds to match the State funds being awarded; and 4) authorize the Chief Financial Officer to increase appropriations in the amount of the grant award.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- State Water Resources Control Board grant agreement template
- Resolution

CONTACT

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