



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Public Works



Date: September 15, 2015
Board Meeting Date: October 20, 2015
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: James C. Porter, Director of Public Works
Subject: Adoption of Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution:

- A) Approving a Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement; and
- B) Revoking and rescinding any earlier agreement the County may have entered into relative to the June 14, 1994 Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement for San Mateo County.

BACKGROUND:

Although mutual aid agreements are standard and common for police and fire services, Public Works functions do not operate in the same manner during emergency or disaster events. Instead, Public Works mutual aid is provided through a hierarchical emergency response procedure that involves affected city jurisdictions, once they have exhausted their own resources, to rely on County resources and ultimately State and Federal resources to respond. There currently is no formal mechanism in place that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, reimbursement, and liability issues associated with mutual aid response when neighboring local jurisdictions provide assistance directly.

On June 14, 1994, your Board adopted Resolution 58365, for the execution of a Public Works Mutual Aid agreement and designated the Director of Public Works as the County's coordinator. Unfortunately, the agreement was not embraced by the Public Works community and has not been effective.

In 2006, a procedural guide, "The Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement", was created. However, the effort to implement the guide was not successful. The lack of success may have occurred due to a lack of "buy-in" from the agencies that were affected.

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In 2013/2014, the County was significantly impacted by heavy winter storms. During the storm event response, the County's Office of Emergency Services (OES) encountered significant difficulties in obtaining public mutual aid assistance for city of East Palo Alto due to the County being fully extended addressing emergencies in the unincorporated County areas, and no formal procedure to seek aid from adjacent jurisdictions.

OES staff requested assistance through the City/County Engineers' Association of San Mateo County (CCEA) to compose a public works mutual aid agreement, so emergencies could be handled more efficiently. As a result of the request, CCEA created a subcommittee to begin working on a new agreement. All Public Works directors were able to provide feedback about the contents of the agreement.

DISCUSSION:

Section 8630 et. seq. of the California Government Code allows local government agencies to enter into mutual aid agreements.

In essence, the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement has been written by "practitioners" in a manner that is simple, straightforward, and easily understood by those who will be using the document. In the event of a disaster, this agreement would provide an organized means of providing voluntary mutual aid to neighboring entities by those most able to respond.

The agreement and accompanying Procedures Guide will establish a "zone" concept of aid that mirrors existing and developing zones in police and fire mutual aid.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution and agreement to form.

Approval of this action contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of Collaborative Community by allowing agencies to receive and provide public works mutual aid in the event of a disaster.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with the approval of this agreement. The agreement requires the "requesting party" reimburse the "assisting party(ies)" for all of its costs of providing assistance within sixty days.