



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PARKS

File #: 21-095

Board Meeting Date: 1/26/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director

Subject: Application for Grant Funding from the California Office of Emergency Services' ("Cal OES") Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for Wildfire Hazard Risk Reduction at Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve and Junipero Serra County Park

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing:

- A) The Parks Director, or the Parks Director's designee, to submit an application for \$450,000 in grant funding from the Office of Emergency Services' (Cal OES) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for Wildfire Hazard Risk Reduction at Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve; and
- B) The Parks Director, or the Parks Director's designee, to submit an application for \$300,000 in grant funding from Cal OES' HMPG for Wildfire Hazard Risk Reduction at Junipero Serra County Park; and
- C) The President of the Board of Supervisors to execute Cal OES' Designation of Subrecipient's Agent Resolution Form.

BACKGROUND:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA"), through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program ("HMGP"), provides grant funding for eligible mitigation measures that reduce the effects of future natural disasters. In California, these funds are administered by the Cal OES HMGP Unit. Eligible sub-applicants include state agencies, local governments, special districts, and some private non-profit agencies.

As a result of the CZU Lightning Complex fires that burned in Northern California starting in August 2020, and the declaration of a California Statewide Emergency on August 18, 2020, the County is prioritized for grant funding through the HMGP. Eligible projects for funding include wildfire hazard mitigation efforts such as the creation of defensible space and reduction of hazardous fire fuels.

In accordance with HMGP guidelines, the San Mateo County Parks Department (“Department”) submitted Notices of Interest (“NOI”) to Cal OES seeking permission to apply for grant funding. The Department submitted four NOIs for funding to implement critical wildfire risk reduction projects at Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve, Junipero Serra County Park, San Bruno Mountain State and County Park, and Quarry County Park. Upon review of the NOIs, Cal OES invited the Department to submit applications for grant funding to implement the proposed projects at Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve and Junipero Serra County Park.

The proposed projects at San Bruno Mountain State and County Park and Quarry County Park were deemed ineligible under the specifications of the grant program.

DISCUSSION:

Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve

Along the southern boundary of Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve are dense stands of evergreen woodland with dense understories comprised of various potentially combustible plant species. This area would be the focus of the proposed project. Within 200 feet of the proposed project area are 35 private residences. While the forest community is native and desired for retention, the density of vegetation and ladder fuels in proximity to the private residences poses a significant fire risk. The proposed mitigation action is to thin all understory vegetation and small diameter trees and establish a shaded fuel break within 200 feet of the park boundary. The treatment technique will occur using a combination of methods, including mastication and manual removals. To complete this work, the Department is seeking \$450,000 in HMGP grant funds.

Junipero Serra County Park

Dense Oak woodland and Eucalyptus forests are abundant along Junipero Serra County Park’s boundaries. The vegetation conditions have been in their current state for decades, with minimal vegetation management occurring. Funding has been the primary barrier to completing essential fuel reduction work. The proposed mitigation action is to improve defensible space for neighboring properties by establishing a shaded fuel break within 200 feet of the park’s eastern and southern boundaries. Thinning of this understory vegetation by removing brush and trees under eight inches in diameter and removing ladder fuels will break the vertical and horizontal continuity of fuels and improve safety for neighbors. To complete this work, the Department is seeking \$300,000 in HMGP grant funds.

The Department has prioritized fuel reduction projects such as these, and requests this Board’s approval to submit the above-described grant applications for funding through the HMGP to facilitate the implementation of these efforts.

The grant application for Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve is due January 29, 2021, and the application for Junipero Serra County Park is due March 5, 2021. As required by HMGP guidelines, the Department will be required to provide a 25% local match for all HMGP grant funds received.

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

FISCAL IMPACT:

The HMGP requires a 25% Non-Federal Cost Share for the total project activity costs.

For the proposed project at Edgewood County Park, the total activity cost is \$600,000, with a Federal Request Share of \$450,000 (75%), and a Non-Federal Cost Share of \$150,000 (25%). For the

proposed project at Junipero Serra County Park, the total activity cost is \$400,000, with a Federal Request Share of \$300,000 (75%), and a Non-Federal Cost Share of \$100,000 (25%).

Both projects are required to be completed within 36 months of receiving an award notice from the Cal OES HMGP Unit. The Parks Department will rely on existing Measure K funding dedicated to fire fuel reduction efforts as well as include sufficient funding for these projects in future budgets.