



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER: OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

File #: 22-1020

Board Meeting Date: 12/13/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: 4/5th

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Carolyn Bloede, Director, Office of Sustainability

Subject: Amendment to the Agreement with San Mateo Resource Conservation District to Expand the Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Recommendation to:

- A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of the first amendment to the agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District for the expansion of the Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Program increasing the not-to-exceed amount by \$405,000 from \$400,000 to \$805,000 for the term of December 13, 2022, to June 30, 2023.
- B) Approve an Appropriation Transfer Request (ATR) transferring \$405,000 of **Measure K** funds from the County Executive's Office to the Office of Sustainability to fund certain wildfire resiliency measures to be provided under the Agreement.

BACKGROUND:

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) is a special district within San Mateo County that provides comprehensive and integrated services around wildlife, water, climate, fire, and agriculture to the local community. In the wake of the August 2020 CZU Lightning Fire Complex, there have been increased efforts to reduce fire risk in San Mateo County with the RCD at the forefront leading programs that support fire recovery, forest health, and fire resilience. The RCD works in close partnership with local agencies, organizations, and communities to accomplish the goal of improved fire resiliency through the Neighborhood Chipper Program and projects that aim to build fire adapted communities through community engagement, technical assistance and education, strategic fuel breaks, and landscape fuels treatment and vegetation management. The RCD also implements programs in ecosystem conservation and restoration in partnership with local communities that enhance forest health and increase fire resiliency.

District-discretionary **Measure K** funding has been previously provided to the RCD to promote wildfire resiliency as listed below:

- \$175,000 for Wildfire Risk Reduction (March 2019 to June 2020)
- \$150,000 for Post Fire Recovery and Neighborhood Chipping Program (August 15, 2020 through June 30, 2021)
- \$400,000 for the Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Program (October 2020 to December 2024)
- \$75,000 for El Granada Wildfire Resiliency Scoping Project (Sept 2021 to July 2022)

The above funding has resulted in the following outcomes:

- Over \$13 Million in additional funding was leveraged to support Forest Health and Wildfire Resiliency in the county.
- The Neighborhood Chipper program has served over a dozen communities each year with roughly 4,000 homes served since 2019.
- County investments have helped initiate the following projects:
 - Forest Health Projects in Huddard and Wunderlich County Parks reduced wildfire fuel loads across approximately 400 acres (project nearing completion).
 - Shaded fuel beaks and hazardous trees removed across 100 acres of Quarry Park (project is currently on-going).
 - Wildfire Risk Assessment completed for the community of El Granada.
 - Project planning for approximately 2,100 acres of Forest Health work in Butano State Park.
 - Project planning for eradication of a highly invasive and flammable Hypricum infestation using prescribed burning and mechanical treatment across approximately 400 acres.
 - Project planning for a 19-mile shaded fuel break around the community of La Honda (planning and implementation funding has been secured).
 - Supported communities with technical assistance following the CZU lightning complex fire.
 - Ongoing development of a Regional Prioritization Plan for forest health and fire resiliency across the Santa Cruz Mountain range.
 - Public Works Plan to streamline forest health and fire resiliency projects in the Coastal Zone in partnership with the California Coastal Commission
 - RCD assistance in developing an exemption to hazard tree removal permits.

On February 22, 2022, a \$400,000 agreement was executed with the RCD for the Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Program (Resolution No. 078732) of which \$100,000 was Measure K monies with the balance being general fund monies. Through this agreement, the RCD completed two projects including the El Granada Resiliency Scoping and Central Coast Fire Modeling which identified potential actions that would most effectively reduce wildfire risk in the county. Additionally, the RCD provided 10 chipping events to the community with 276 households clearing brush and small trees from around their homes to be broken down by a mobile woodchipper and crew. The RCD Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Program has effectively reduced wildfire risks along the coast, rural, and forested areas of San Mateo County.

DISCUSSION:

This proposed first amendment to the Forest Health and Fire Resiliency Agreement increases the not-to-exceed contract amount by an additional \$405,000 from \$400,000 to \$805,000. The RCD will continue the work of providing the neighborhood chipper program through June 30, 2023. This will result in approximately 15 communities (~275 to 550 homes/year) receiving chipping services one to

two times per year. Additionally, the RCD will work on developing plans and permits for a minimum of three projects that reduce wildfire risk along the San Mateo County coast, such as strategic fuel breaks, prescribed burns, vegetation management, and landscape fuels treatment. Finally, the RCD will continue to advance permit streamlining tools to increase the pace and scale of fire resiliency work in San Mateo County and the region.

The ATR presented to this Board for appropriation of the **Measure K** funds has been approved by the County Executive and Controller or their authorized designees. The resolution contains the County’s standard provision allowing amendment of the County’s fiscal obligations by a maximum of \$25,000 (in aggregate). The resolution has been reviewed and approved by County Attorney as to form.

MEASURE K PERFORMANCE MEASURE:

Description	Amount	Target
Continuation of the San Mateo Fire Safe Council’s Chipper Program, permit streamlining, and support fire resiliency related project development.	\$405,000	Provide chipping services to approximately 15 communities a year. Advance streamlined permitting initiatives related to CEQA, Coastal Commission, and resource agency permits. Develop a minimum of three projects.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are sufficient **Measure K** funds in the FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget for this specific \$405,000 **Measure K** request. The ATR will transfer **Measure K** funds in the amount of \$405,000 from the County Executive’s Office to the Office of Sustainability.