

Council Business Meeting

Date: December 21st, 2021

Agenda Item	Wildfire Mitigation Grant Proposals	
From	Chris Chambers	Wildfire Division Chief
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SUMMARY

The Fire Department is seeking approval to apply for Oregon Department of Forestry grant to further our wildfire mitigation and risk reduction programs. This grant is for landscape fuels reduction and fits the Ashland Forest Resiliency Project's ongoing array of work across ownership boundaries in and adjacent to the municipal watershed.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

City Council Goal: Address Climate Change

City Council Goal: Reduce Wildfire and Smoke Risk

City Plans: Ashland Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2004 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2016 Ashland Forest Plan

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

Council has supported wildfire risk reduction through longstanding programs and investment, including:

- AFR Project Water Surcharge since 2015
- Funding of Wildfire Division Staff since 2006
- Wildfire Prevention Code Adoptions in 2018 and 2021
- Adopting the Ashland Forest Plan, Wildfire Protection Plan, and Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Beginning in the 2021-2023 Biennium, the State of Oregon made a major investment in wildfire response and risk reduction with the passage of Senate Bill 762. Grant programs have already resulted, and Ashland's high wildfire risk put us in a high priority ranking category for grant funds. The grant deadline for landscape resiliency proposals is January 10th. Staff has contacted private landowners who have given their approval to be included in this proposal based on past participation in wildfire fuels reduction grant programs.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The Landscape Resiliency grant requires a 25% match. The match will be met by a combination of private owner contributions and previously budgeted City funds and staff time, which amounts to \$75,000 as the City's share. Council approved a contract with Grayback Forestry, Inc in November for \$350,000 that put into place the City's biennium allocation to wildfire fuels maintenance and treatment from the water use surcharge. That contract alone more than satisfies the City's obligation for matching funds under this grant. The City will charge a 10% administration fee and recoup another 10% for staff time directly related to the project's implementation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the Fire Department’s request to move forward with this grant application to the Oregon Department of Forestry.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

“I move that the City Council approve Ashland Fire & Rescue’s request for approval to apply for wildfire fuels reduction grant funding from the State of Oregon.”

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Link to ODF Landscape Resiliency Grant Program:

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/pages/landscape-resiliency-program.aspx>