



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** April 18, 2017

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Fire Prevention Bureau, Fire Department

**SUBJECT:** Authorization To Contract With The California Department of Forestry And Fire Protection For Inmate Crews To Conduct Vegetation Management Services In The Wildland Assessment District

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, a Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Authorizing the City Fire Marshal to Contract with The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for Inmate Crews to Conduct Vegetation Management Services.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Fire Department continues to seek more efficient and cost effective ways to implement the Wildland Fire Plan and deliver key services of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District (WFSAD). The services of the resident funded district are Road Clearance, Chipping Services and Vegetation Management. Vegetation Management is a major component of the WFSAD and is fundamental in increasing fire safety for the Wildland Urban Interface areas. The primary vegetation management areas in the City of Santa Barbara are described in the Wildland Fire Plan, adopted by City Council in 2004.

Experience has shown that the Vegetation Management aspect of the program has become the most challenging to accomplish as costs associated with the work have risen at a faster pace than road clearance and chipping. There are many reasons for the increase, which include environmental constraints, relatively remote and difficult to access work sites, and a relative shortage of contractors willing to commit the employee hours necessary to complete the work. All of the work is done by hand to protect drainages, riparian habitat and sensitive native species, making the work particularly labor intensive. As a result, fewer competitive commercial bidders have been available in recent years. Projects for Fiscal Year 2018 are in the area known as the Community Fuels Treatment Network, where the northern border of the City meets the fire protection areas of surrounding jurisdictions, including the Montecito Fire Protection District, Santa Barbara County, and the Los Padres National Forest.

In the past, the Fire Department has contracted with the inmate work crews for various vegetation management projects and would like to return to that practice for Fiscal Year 2018, as well as for future work. The Fire Department has the opportunity to contract with the Ventura Conservation Camp to provide these services under the direction of experienced Cal Fire supervisors, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Officers, and Fire Department wildland personnel. The crews offer exceptional work at a reasonable cost and are accustomed to the type of wildland conditions that vegetation management requires. Employing the inmate work crews will save money for the district and enable us to accomplish more vegetation management projects during the year.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The vegetation management projects of the WFSAD comprise roughly eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000) of the overall WFSAD budget. Our goal is to complete 8 acres throughout the project area at an estimated cost per acre of roughly \$1,000, equal to a daily rate of \$250. This represents a substantial savings when compared to other contractors whose costs range from \$4,000 to \$6,000 per acre, equal to a daily rate of \$1,800. Over the years, the potential cost savings to the City would be significant, allowing us to better protect the community from the threat of wildfire.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

100% of all material chipped is recycled. All vegetation management services are conducted in accordance with the 2004 Wildland Fire Plan Environmental Impact Report and the 2016 Department of Fish and Wildlife Streambed Alteration Agreement.

**ATTACHMENT:** Cost comparison chart prepared

**PREPARED BY:** Joseph Poiré, Fire Marshal

**SUBMITTED BY:** Patrick McElroy, Fire Chief

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office

**ATTACHMENT**

**Ventura Crew Daily Costs - Taken From FC-32 Form**

<b>Total \$200/day (plus current F/Y administrative fee) 1 Ventura Crews</b>	<b>\$28 (14.31%DAILY ADMIN FEE)</b>	<b>\$228 DAILY TOTAL including admin fee</b>
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Including Mileage the cost of using the Ventura Crews for the FY2018 CFTN Project is projected to be ~\$250/day

**Cost Comparison - FY2012-FY2017 Vegetation Management Projects**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Contractor/Agency</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Cost/Acre</b>	<b>Total Days Worked</b>	<b>Cost/Day</b>	<b>Acres/Day</b>
2012	Las Tunas/Mountain Dr	Peterson's Tree Care	13.38	\$107,040	\$8,000	56	\$1,911.43	0.24
2012	Hillcrest	Wilson Landscapes	12.77	\$53,123	\$4,160	26	\$2,043.20	0.49
2013	Coyote/Westmont/Circle	CCCs	6.41	\$10,000	\$1,560	17	\$588.24	0.38
2014	Alston Place	Enviroscaping	11	\$33,192	\$3,017	20	\$1,659.60	0.55
2015	Jimeno/Garcia	Enviroscaping	5	\$24,867	\$4,973	25	\$994.68	0.20
2016	Jimeno/Garcia/Ferrelo	CCCs	6	\$35,000	\$5,833	14	\$2,500.00	0.43
2017	Jimeno/Garcia	CCCs	2	\$14,170	\$7,085	8	\$1,771.25	0.25

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Contractor/Agency</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Cost/Acre</b>	<b>Estimated Days</b>	<b>Cost/Day</b>	<b>Estimated Acres/Day</b>
2018	FY2018 CFTN	Ventura Crews	8	\$10,000	\$1,000	40	\$250	0.2

**Summary:**

Using the most conservative estimates, costs of using the Ventura Conservation Camp Program shows an approximate savings of \$4000-\$6000 per acre, or ~\$1,500 per day compared to using a contractor.