



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 290.00

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 19, 2009

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Fire Prevention Division, Fire Department

SUBJECT: Set A Date For Public Hearing Regarding Renewal Of Levy For Fiscal Year 2009-2010 For The Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Declaring its Intention to Renew the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment Within the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones; Declaring the Work to be of More Than General or Ordinary Benefit and Describing the District to be Assessed to Pay the Costs and Expenses Thereof; Preliminarily Approving the Updated Engineer's Report; Stating Intention to Levy Assessments for Fiscal Year 2009-2010; and Establishing a Time of 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, June 16, 2009, in the City Council Chambers for a Public Hearing on the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment .

DISCUSSION:

On May 4, 2004, the City Council adopted the City's Wildland Fire Plan and certified the corresponding Environmental Impact Report.

On April 11, 2006, the City Council adopted Resolutions Nos. 06-022 and 06-023. Resolution 06-022 declared the City's intention to order expansion of vegetation road clearance, implementation of a defensible space inspection and assistance program, and implementation of a vegetation management program within the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones and preliminarily approved the Engineer's Report. Resolution 06-023 adopted Proposition 218 assessment ballot procedures.

On July 11, 2006, the City Council adopted Resolution 06-064 which declared expansion of vegetation road clearance, implementation of a defensible space inspection and assistance program, and implementation of a vegetation management program within the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones. The Resolution described the special benefit to be assessed and approved the Engineer's Report, confirmed the diagram and assessment, and ordering levy of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2006-2007.

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The City subsequently renewed the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment on June 19, 2007, for Fiscal Year 2007-2008, by adopting Resolution 07-048, and again on June 17, 2008, under Resolution 08-048, renewing the District for Fiscal Year 2008-2009. In the District's third year, the use of Assessment funds continued to reduce the risk of wildland fires through the reduction of flammable vegetation. The Road Clearance program has resulted in the clearance of an additional 14 miles of roadways in the high fire hazard areas. The total number of Defensible Space Inspections provided throughout the entire assessment area has increased to more than 100 assists. Chipping services for homeowners continues throughout the District, allowing a cost effective way for homeowners to dispose of cut material. The Vegetation Management program completed initial treatment in the Las Canoas area, a prescription that involved 20 acres of vegetation management. A biological assessment and the prescribed treatment of 8 acres throughout the Van's Meadow area of Skofield Park was also completed.

The District's third year also brought the tragedy of the Tea Fire, a reminder of the need for renewed commitment to the District. The properties destroyed in the fire were in both the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones. As a result of the fire, the City is in the process of issuing a refund of the 2008 Assessment to Tea Fire survivors with homes suffering 50% or greater damage. Resolution 06-064, which formed the District in 2006, provides that for any fiscal year, the District, as it applied to any parcel, may be corrected, cancelled or refunded, as appropriate, by order of the City Council or Fire Chief. The County Assessor's Office has reassessed properties in the Tea Fire area based on their current status for FY2010.

As provided in Resolution 06-064, the Assessment may be annually renewed with a Consumer Price Index increase of not to exceed 4%. The new rate for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 as suggested in the Engineers Report will be set at the annual rate of \$69.83 per single family parcel in the Foothill Zone and \$86.58 in the Extreme Foothill Zone. This amount is the same amount as last year due to a negligible increase in the Consumer Price Index. Staff recommends that the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District be continued for Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

As stipulated in Resolution 06-064, an updated Engineer's Report has been prepared and includes the proposed budget and assessment rate. The updated Engineer's Report must be considered by the City Council at a noticed public hearing and serves as the basis for the continuation of the assessments. The updated Engineer's Report is available for review in the City Council reading file and at Fire Department Administration, 925 De La Vina Street and the City Clerk's Office at City Hall at 735 Anacapa Street.

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NEXT STEPS:

A public hearing to consider the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment renewal is required but not a vote or balloting process. That City Council will set the public hearing for

Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 2:00P.M. At the conclusion of the public hearing the City Council may adopt a resolution to levy the 2009-2010 assessment.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Vegetation removed through vegetation road clearance or the inspection and assistance program is chipped and spread back on to the ground or spread in areas of local parks. The goal is reuse at least 80% of all chipped material locally avoiding the cost of disposal fees, extra vehicle trips and landfill use. Non-native pest plants are not chipped and hauled off site to be disposed of properly.

PREPARED BY: Joe Poiré, Fire Marshal

SUBMITTED BY: Andrew DiMizio, Interim Fire Chief

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office