



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 290.00

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 4, 2010

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Fire Prevention Division, Fire Department

SUBJECT: Set A Date For Public Hearing Regarding Renewal Of Levy For Fiscal Year 2011 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 2010-2011; and Establishing a Time of 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, May 25, 2010, in the City Council Chambers for a Public Hearing on the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment.

DISCUSSION:

On July 11, 2006, the City Council adopted Resolution 06-064 which declared the Council'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. The Resolution described the special benefit to be assessed and approved an Engineer's Report, confirmed the diagram and assessment, and ordered levy of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2007. As required by the Resolution, the Assessment must be renewed annually by the Council. The City has renewed the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment for the past three years (Resolutions 07-048, 08-048 and 09-038).

This year, Assessment funds continued to reduce the risk and severity of wildland fires through the reduction of flammable vegetation. The assessment provides three primary services:

Vegetation Road Clearance: Each year the assessment provides approximately 14 miles of road clearance in the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones. The frequency is such that

most roads in the District are cleared of impeding vegetation every three years. Clearing vegetation from the roadways is required by law and allows for safer egress of residents and ingress of first responders during an emergency.

Defensible Space Inspection and Assistance: This element of the assessment provides assistance to property owners in creating defensible space around their homes. Defensible space assistance will again involve scores of site visits to assist homeowners. In addition, the assessment provides chipping services to residents of the District after the vegetation has been cut. Chipping services provides a cost effective way for homeowners to dispose of cut material. The chipped vegetation may be reused as a ground cover in landscaping.

Vegetation Management: Vegetation Management reduces the overall fuel load in given units by selectively thinning brush and trimming trees in a wildland area. The goal is to lessen the severity of a fire in the event that one occurs. In Fiscal Year 2010, vegetation management projects were completed in Skofield Park and near Saint Mary's Seminary, thinning the fuel load in the path of the Jesusita Fire and reducing the severity of the fire in that neighborhood. The Vegetation Management program continued in the Ontare Road area, a project that will resume at the end of the summer. Also planned for this fiscal year is the completion of 18 acres near Las Canoas Road.

The Wildland Fire Assessment may be annually increased by the Consumer Price Index in an amount not to exceed 4%. Although the Consumer Price Index rose 1.83% this year, the Engineer has not recommended an increase in the assessment for Fiscal Year 2011. The rate for Fiscal Year 2011 as suggested in the Engineer's Report will therefore 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, the same rates as Fiscal Year 2010. The estimated Fiscal Year 2011 cost of providing services is \$221,484. Staff recommends that the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District be continued for Fiscal Year 2011.

As required 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 at Fire Department Administration, 925 De La Vina Street and the City Clerk's Office at City Hall at 735 Anacapa Street.

NEXT STEPS:

That Council set a date of May 25, 2010 at 2:00 P.M. for the public hearing to consider renewal of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the City Council may approve the preliminary Engineer's Report and may adopt a resolution to levy the Fiscal Year 2011 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, Fire Chief

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office